Bengaluru Monday, March 2, 2026 Pages 14 Vol 79 No 61 ₹7

www.deccanherald.com Follow us on @deccanherald

DH

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

Sublime Samson powers India into semis

Defending champs beat Windies by five wickets in a must-win match

Page 14

Business P.10

AI not going to eliminate us; we'll do more & be busier: Cognizant's Hodjat

Nation

Modi slams DMK for 'stealing' from poor P.8

Nation

India, Canada set to chart new course P.9

State

SI collapses, dies during 5-km run in Udupi P.4

Iran talks revenge after Khamenei is killed

WEST ASIA ON BOIL: Trump claims Tehran wants to talk; US military reports 1st casualties; interim council takes charge

DUBAI/TEHRAN/JERUSALEM, AGENCIES

Iran vowed revenge Sunday after the killing of its supreme leader and traded strikes with Israel as part of a widening war prompted by a surprise US and Israeli bombardment a day earlier.

Blasts in Tehran sent a huge plume of smoke into the sky in an area where there are government buildings. Iranian authorities say more than 200 people have been killed since the start of the US and Israeli strikes that killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other senior leaders.

US President Donald Trump posted on social media on Sunday that nine ships of the Iranian navy have been sunk. "Some of them relatively large and important."

Earlier, Iran fired missiles at an ever-widening list of targets in Israel and Gulf Arab states in retaliation while Israel pledged "non-stop" strikes against Iran.

People react as they gather at the Enghelab Square, after Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in Israeli and US strikes, in Tehran, Iran. REUTERS

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

In Israel, loud explosions caused by missile impacts or interceptions could be heard in Tel Aviv. Israel's rescue services said nine people were killed and 28 wounded in a strike in the central town of Beit Shemesh, bringing the overall death toll in the country to 11.

The US military said three service members have been killed and five others seriously wounded since the operations began. They are the first known American casualties from the fighting.

Later in the day, Trump said he would "be talking" to Iranian leaders but was vague on the timing and noted that much of the country's leadership was dead. "They want to talk, and I have agreed to talk, so I will be talking to them. They should have done it sooner," Trump was quoted as saying by *The Atlantic*.

An Israeli official said that their present focus is to undermine the Iranian regime to the point of toppling it.

▸ Iran, Page 5

Leadership House in central Tehran. Khamenei's office and residence on the compound that was hit

"You have crossed our red line and must pay the price. We will deliver such devastating blows that you yourselves will be driven to beg

Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf
Iran's parliamentary speaker

How the operation to kill Khamenei unfolded

- CIA has been tracking Khamenei for months
- It gets intel that a meeting of top Iranian officials would take place Saturday morning at a leadership compound in Tehran
- Intel says the supreme leader would be at the site
- US & Israel decide to adjust timing of attack
- The allies had originally planned to launch a strike at night, but changed decision to use the fresh intel
- Operation begins around 6 am in Israel
- Israeli fighter jets take off armed with long-range, highly accurate munitions
- 2 hrs and five minutes after the jets took off, at around 9.40 am in Tehran, missiles strike the compound

Who is running Iran now?

President **Masoud Pezeshkian** (71)

Judiciary chief **Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei** (68)

Senior cleric **Alireza Arafi** (67)

Security chief **Ali Larijani** (68)

Indian carriers cancel 350 flights on Sunday

NEW DELHI/BENGALURU/MANGALURU, DHNS: A total of 350 international flights operated by Indian airlines, including 225 from Delhi and Mumbai airports, were cancelled on Sunday due to airspace restrictions in West Asia, disturbing the travel plans of hundreds of fliers, including many who were returning to work.

Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) witnessed cancellation of at least 16 flights, mainly bound for the Gulf and Europe, on Sunday. Mangaluru airport too witnessed cancellation of flights to West Asia.

Early Sunday, the Ministry of Civil Aviation said Indian operators were expected to cancel 444 international flights during the day. On Saturday, 410 international flights of Indian carriers were cancelled.

The ministry said it is in close coordination with all stakeholders. Later in the day, it said 350 flights were cancelled on Sunday.

▸ Flights, Page 5

No immediate oil jitters for India, but higher prices a worry

NEW DELHI, PTI

India is unlikely to face any immediate physical disruption in oil supplies despite escalating tensions around Iran and the Strait of Hormuz, but higher crude prices and broader macroeconomic pressures are expected in the near term, officials and analysts said.

Indian refiners currently hold sufficient crude inventories to meet at least 10 days of requirements, with fuel stocks covering another 5-7 days, cushioning the impact of any short-duration disruption. Even as rapidly unfolding developments in West Asia raise geopolitical uncertainty, contingency plans - including tapping diversified suppliers in US, West Africa, Latin America and even Russia as well as strategic reserves - are in place, they said.

The Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical energy chokepoints, handles nearly 20% of global petroleum liquids and about a fifth of global LNG shipments. About 2.5-2.7 million barrels per day, or roughly 50% of India's crude imports, transit through the route, largely sourced from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait.

Close to 605 of India's LNG imports and almost all of its LPG shipments also pass through the Strait, underscoring its importance to India's energy security.

While a short-lived disruption may have limited impact, the immediate fallout is expected to be reflected in oil prices. Brent crude closed near seven-month highs to about $80 a barrel amid rising tensions.

▸ Oil, Page 5

PM speaks to UAE prez

PM Modi on Sunday night spoke to the President of the UAE and strongly condemned the attacks on the Gulf nation. Modi also thanked the UAE president for taking care of the Indian community living in the Gulf nation. P8

92 Kannadigas stranded

Karnataka has fully activated the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) and all District Emergency Operations Centres (DEOCs) in response to the West Asia situation. At least 92 people from the state are stranded in the Gulf. P3

Edit: Imperialist terror unleashed P.6

CCS headed by PM Modi discusses West Asia situation P.8

From Khomeini's roots to Chabahar's reach: India's Iran connect P.8

Village in Chikkaballapur grieves Khamenei's death P.3

Supreme leader's death triggers joy and grief in Iran P.12

Despite massive US attack, regime change unlikely in Iran P.12

18 killed in blast at explosives making unit near Nagpur

CM Fadnavis orders thorough investigation

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

At least 18 people were killed and 24 others injured in a powerful blast at an explosives manufacturing factory in Maharashtra's Nagpur on Sunday, police said.

The blast occurred at approximately 7 am at the SBL Energy Ltd factory, a manufacturer of mining and industrial explosives, in Katol, approximately 50 km from Nagpur city.

The injured were shifted to a hospital in Nagpur, the police said.

Rescue personnel carry a survivor after a blast at a factory in Maharashtra's Nagpur district on Sunday. PTI

The bodies were charred beyond recognition and samples of the family members were being taken for DNA testing to ascertain the identities of the deceased, said officials.

In a post on X, Prime Minister Modi said the incident was deeply distressing.

"My condolences to the families of the deceased. I pray for the speedy recovery of the injured. The local administration is assisting those affected," he said.

PM Modi said an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each deceased, while the injured would be given Rs 50,000. President Droupadi Murmu also expressed grief over the incident.

▸ Blast, Page 5

4 infra firms bid for Hebbal short tunnel

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

2.8km short tunnel

BIDDERS

1) Dilip Buildcon Lt (DBL)
2) Max Infra (India) Ltd
3) Cemindia Projects
4) Rithwik Projects

Four infrastructure companies have participated in the tender to construct a six-lane short tunnel road at Hebbal, which is aimed at easing chronic congestion at one of the city's busiest traffic junctions.

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), which opened the bids last week, has estimated the project to cost Rs 1,086 crore even as some mobility experts have questioned its long-term utility.

Sources confirmed that companies such as Dilip Buildcon Limited (DBL), Max Infra (India) Ltd, Cemindia Projects and Rithwik Projects are in the fray. Unlike the 17-km North-East Tunnel Road project (Hebbal-Silk Board Junction), which saw only two eligible bidders, the BDA has attracted better response with all four companies carrying the experience of tunnelling and complex civil engineering projects.

As part of the tender process, BDA officials are expected to first evaluate the technical bids to assess eligibility, experience in tunnel construction and financial capacity. Financial bids will be opened subsequently, following which the contract may be awarded. The BDA has set a target of completing the project in 18 months.

The BDA floated tenders for the 2.8-km short tunnel road project in December.

▸ Tunnel, Page 5

Madiga leaders to meet CM to resolve quota conundrum

BENGALURU, DHNS: A delegation of SC (Left)/Madiga leaders is expected to meet Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday and urge him to implement internal reservation within the 15% cap for Scheduled Castes while recruiting candidates for 56,432 government jobs.

The proposed meeting comes after a Government Order sought to recruit as per the reservation order that was in force before December 28, 2022 (15% for SCs and 3% for STs), effectively implying that this massive recruitment drive will not include internal reservation.

Details on Page 4

Quickly

Massive blaze guts B'luru warehouse

A massive blaze was reported at a sofa and mattress warehouse in Anjanapura on Sunday morning, officials said. No casualties or injuries were reported. A short circuit is suspected to have triggered the fire, but an investigation has been initiated.

Details on Page 2

PU student killed in elephant attack

A Pre-university (PU) student was killed in a wild elephant attack at Bettathoor village in Madikeri taluk of Kodagu district on Saturday night. The deceased, identified as Pooja (17), a student of St Michael's College in Madikeri, had gone to her native place with her father when the incident took place.

Details on Page 4

15 Maoists surrender in Chhattisgarh

Fifteen Naxalites, including veteran ultra Vikas, carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 73 lakh on their heads, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Mahasamund district on Sunday, resulting in the outlawed movement getting dismantled in the Raipur-Sambalpur belt straddling the state's border with Odisha, police officials said.

The Maoists, including nine women, belonged to the Balangir-Bargarh-Mahasamund (BBM) division of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), the police added.

Rethink coast guard retirement age: SC

The Supreme Court has said that it was high time that the regulations governing service conditions and retirement age of coast guard officers were revisited, as the Central government could not remain bound by frameworks conceived in the British era.

'Corrupt, dramebaaz': Kejriwal attacks PM

Aam Aadmi Party national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi by calling him "corrupt", "dramebaaz" and one who is "scared" of activists like Sonam Wangchuk and women MPs in Parliament.

Kyiv says Russia accepted US plan

Russia said at recent talks in Geneva it would accept the US proposal for Ukraine's post-war security guarantees, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff said on Saturday. "At the last talks, the Russian side said for example that they would accept the security guarantees offered to Ukraine by the United States," said top aide Kyrylo Budanov in an interview.

Details on Page 12

INFRA AUDIT

Cops' plan to decongest B'luru: skywalks, shift bus stops

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

In a bid to reclaim Bengaluru's primary carriage ways from design-induced gridlock, the city traffic police have proposed skywalks at 101 locations, shifting of 103 "unscientific" bus stops and urgent fixing of 137 chronic waterlogging spots before the monsoon sets in.

The proposals form the key part of a data-backed infrastructure audit submitted by the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) to the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

The audit, which spans all police divisions under the jurisdiction of BTP, highlights that the current placement of 103 bus stops within 50 metres of major junctions acts as a primary friction point, causing trailing traffic to choke entire corridors.

To counter this, the BTP has proposed 63 new bus bays and 66 multi-level car parking (MLCP) locations to take stationary vehicles off the main roads.

GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao confirmed to *DH* that the authority is integrating these requirements into its upcoming budget.

"We are making provisions in our next budget to execute these works. For waterlogging, we are tackling several spots through the World Bank and NDMF schemes. Projects in areas like Sindura Choultry and Yelahanka are being fast-tracked using pipe-pushing technology for underground drains. We hope to complete substantial works by June to ensure the monsoon doesn't paralyse the city," Rao said.

Passengers use a skywalk at Majestic in Bengaluru. DH FILE PHOTO

Regarding the proposal for 101 skywalks, Rao noted that the goal is to segregate pedestrian and vehicular movements to improve safety and vehicle speed. Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Karthik Reddy added that the 137 waterlogging points are critical. "With mango showers expected in a month, we have requested the GBA to rectify these spots immediately. Additionally, 84 poorly designed or illegal speed breakers have been identified for removal as they are leading to accidents," he said.

▸ Traffic, Page 5

Civic officials, including GBA Chief M Maheshwar Rao and Corporation Commissioner DS Ramesh, joined the 10-km walkathon in East Bengaluru on Sunday. PHOTO: GBA

Mahadevapura to get 50-km safe footpaths in two months

BENGALURU, DHNS

Over 120 people participated in the 10-km walkathon organised by the Bengaluru East City Corporation on Sunday.

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao, who took part in the event, instructed the corporation to develop 50 km of safe and accessible pedestrian pathways in the Mahadevapura Zone within the next two months.

After flagging off a 10-km pedestrian walk, Rao said prioritising footpath development in areas along the metro corridors would greatly benefit people. He directed officials to identify and remove obstacles on footpaths, resolve road-widening issues, and clear other encroachments to ensure safe pedestrian movement.

The pedestrian walk, part of the 'Project Walkaluru' initiative, began on November 1. So far, a total of 88 km of footpaths have been inspected across areas, including Shivajinagar (11 km), Koramangala (5 km), Jayanagar (5 km), Banaswadi (5 km), Thanisandra (8 km), Yelahanka (10 km), and Bengaluru South.

During Sunday's walkathon, people covered a continuous 10-km stretch of footpath along the metro's Purple Line from Phoenix Marketcity Mall to Hope Farm.

They identified issues such as the need to repair slabs at 10 locations, unauthorised vehicle parking at two spots, construction materials dumped at one area, illegal encroachment at one location, and Bescom-related technical issues at four locations.

Officials were instructed to resolve all identified issues.

Corporation Commissioner Ramesh DS, Development Additional Commissioner Lokhande Snehal Sudhakar and other officials were present.

Clean-up drive at Kembathalli Lake

BENGALURU, DHNS: Nonprofit Urban Wings Foundation organised a clean-up drive at Kembathalli Lake, off Bannerghatta Road, on Sunday morning.

Members of the NGO, along with residents of the Arya Hamsa Apartment Owners' Cooperative Society, collected nearly 50 large garbage bags filled predominantly with plastic waste, as well as paper, chocolate wrappers, diapers and other discarded materials, a news release stated.

Civic officials, including sanitation workers, assisted in transporting the collected waste in a municipal garbage vehicle.

In a letter to the local MLA and the chief engineer of the civic body, the organisers called for revival measures for the lake, sustained restoration efforts and long-term ecological protection.

Former local corporator K Somashekar visited the site to express support for the initiative and discussed plans for the lake's revival, the press release added.

Man kills wife over marital dispute; takes video and kills himself

BENGALURU, DHNS: A man allegedly killed his wife before taking his own life at their house on the outskirts of Bengaluru, police said on Sunday.

The deceased are Deepant Sabar (31) and his wife Manjula Sabar (27).

Investigations suggested that Deepant killed Manjula after a family dispute and later recorded a video in front of her body before taking his own life. A death note written in Odia was also recovered from his mobile phone, the police said.

According to police, the couple worked at a private company in Bommasandra and moved to their current rented house in Suryanagar village over two weeks ago.

On the night of February 26, the building owner's mother checked the window after seeing no movement and found the woman lying motionless. She then informed her son, the landlord.

Police were alerted. When investigators arrived and broke open the house, they found Manjula dead on the bed and Deepant hanging in another room. The bodies were shifted for autopsy procedures and handed over to the police following the completion.

A case has been registered at the Surya City police station and further probe is underway.

(If you are in distress or having suicidal tendencies, please reach out to these 24/7 helplines: KIRAN 1800-599-0019 or Arogya Sahayavani at 104)

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION

Construction Organisation, South Western Railway invites applications for engagement of Sector Expert from the Indian Railway Service of Engineers (IRSE) Officers who have **Retired from SAG or Higher Grade** for the purpose of Peer Review of DPRs for a period of 03 (Three) Years.

The Total Number of Requirements is for 03 Posts.

The last date for receipt of applications through e-mail in dycecnwbnc@gmail.com up to **24:00 hrs. of 25-03-2026** in a single and legible PDF file.

For further instructions/notification/other details please visit www.swr.indianrailways.gov.in > About Us > Contruction Organisation - > Engaging Sector Expert

Deputy Chief Engineer/Works/ Construction
Bengaluru Cantonment

PUB/943/AAF/PRB/SWR/2025-26

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
EMPANELMENT OF ADVERTISING AGENCIES FOR SWR - 2026

For and on behalf of the president of India applications are invited to form a panel of advertising agencies for Handling of Railway Advertisements including Display Campaigns in Print Media, PR work of South Western Railway. Advertising Agencies with INS accreditation and a full-fledged working office with all facilities in Hubballi can apply for empanelment.

Duly filled in application in the prescribed form with all the relevant documents in sealed envelope marked on the top **"Appplication for Empanelment of Advertising Agencies on South Western Railway - 2026" may be sent to reach the Office of the Chief Public Relations officer, South Western Railway, Fourth Floor, Rail Soudha. Gadag Road, Hubballi - 580 020. Karnataka State.**

Last Date for submission up to: **11:00 hrs. on 24.03.2026**
Date of opening: **11:30 hrs. on 24.03.2026**

For details log on: swr.indianrailways.gov.in

PUB/940/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2025-26

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

Massive blaze rips through warehouse; no casualties

Short circuit suspected to have triggered the fire

BENGALURU, DHNS

A massive blaze was reported on Sunday morning at a sofa and mattress warehouse in Anjanapura, officials said.

No casualties or injuries were reported.

Fire department sources said they received a distress call at 8.35 am about a fire that had broken out in an 80x20 warehouse.

Seven water bowsers, one water tanker, and a team from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) were immediately deployed to the spot, sources added.

The full extent of the damage is still being assessed. However, firefighters ensured that the blaze was brought under control and did not significantly affect nearby apartment buildings.

As a precautionary measure, traffic was diverted, officials said.

Authorities stated that the outer portions of some apartment buildings, including windowpanes and glass fittings, sustained damage.

"About five vehicles parked at the godown were also gutted in the fire. Traffic was diverted to ensure the firefighting operation continued uninterrupted. Residents of some buildings were temporarily shifted to safer blocks within the apartment complexes," a firefighter told *DH*.

A short circuit is suspected to have triggered the fire, though an investigation is underway. "Police are also tracking down the owner of the warehouse to verify documentation and the legality of the structure," a senior officer said.

Flames and thick plumes of smoke billow from a sofa warehouse after a massive fire tore through the building in Anjanapura on Sunday. DH PHOTO

The outer portions of some apartment buildings in the vicinity, including windowpanes and glass fittings, sustained damage. Five vehicles parked at the godown were also gutted in the fire.

Chickpet market blaze

Last week, a massive fire gutted 21 shops in a three-storey commercial complex in Chickpet's Pete area, causing panic in the busy locality.

The blaze broke out in Kumbarpet, off Avenue Road, on Wednesday around 6.30 am. As most shops were closed, a major tragedy was averted.

Officials said narrow lanes and closely packed buildings made access difficult for fire tenders.

An electrical short circuit is suspected to have triggered the blaze.

Disabled war veterans call pension tax move unfair

Budget 2026 limits exemption to invalidated soldiers

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Union Budget 2026 has removed tax exemption from the pension of disabled soldiers who continued to serve despite their disability; it is now only applicable to soldiers 'invalidated' due to disability.

For over a century, since 1922, disability pension for injuries attributable to or aggravated by military service has remained fully tax exempt. Budget 2026 alters that settled principle from April 1, 2026.

While the Disabled War Veterans (India) (DIWAVE), a non-political organisation supporting war-disabled persons, is protesting the move in Delhi, disabled war veterans in Bengaluru call the move 'unfair' and a 'dishonour' to their service.

One such war veteran affected by the new rule is Lt Col KPM Nair (Retd), who lost his fingers during the Indo-Pak war of 1971.

COLONEL K RAMACHANDRAN (RETD)
DIWAVE Karnataka Chapter

"We are all in our 70s and 80s now, with heavy medical bills and are dependent on our pension. The tax exemption matters more to us now, more than ever before. Such segregation between war veterans who went through the same events is unjust. Some officers had amputations and serious injuries, but decided to stay in the Army and continue to serve.

"During the war, I was deployed in the western sector. I was among the teams recovering mines. During the process, one of the mines went off, and the impact burned all the fingers on my right hand and two-and-a-half fingers on my left hand. I had to get two fingers on my left hand amputated," said Nair, who continued to serve in the Army until superannuation in 2004.

The disability pension is typically provided based on length of service and severity of injury.

Colonel K Ramachandran (Retd), President, DIWAVE Karnataka Chapter, highlighted the negative impact the rules will have on retired soldiers.

The Karnataka chapter has about 80 members.

"We are all in our 70s and 80s now, with heavy medical bills and are dependent on our pension. The tax exemption matters more to us now, more than ever before. Such segregation between war veterans who went through the same events is unjust. Some officers had amputations and serious injuries, but decided to stay in the Army and continue to serve," he said.

Ramachandran, who was also deployed in the 1971 war, sustained injuries when a shell landed in his vicinity, damaging his nerves and leaving him with hearing impairment.

Retd senior vehicle inspector booked for issuing fitness certificates without inspection

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru police have registered a criminal case against a now-retired senior motor vehicle inspector for issuing fitness certificates to over 10,000 out-of-state vehicles without conducting physical inspections.

The FIR was filed on Saturday following a complaint by Deepak L, Regional Transport Officer, HSR Layout, Bengaluru. The FIR names Nisar Ahmed as the accused.

Ahmed served as a senior motor vehicle inspector at the office for around eight years and retired on January 31, 2026.

According to the FIR, advocate S Nataraj Sharma had filed a complaint with the Transport Commissioner, alleging that between August 1, 2025, and January 31, 2026, Ahmed issued over 10,210 'Form 38A' fitness certificates to out-of-state vehicles without inspecting them.

"An investigation by the Joint Commissioner of Transport on February 19, 2026, confirmed through the Vahan software that 10,210 vehicles were processed in this manner," the FIR stated.

An email from the Gujarat Transport Commissioner's office revealed that 41 vehicles from that state received certificates illegally, prompting Ahmed's suspension on January 20.

On February 27, the Transport Commissioner directed that a criminal case be filed, noting that the accused allegedly committed criminal breach of trust and fraud in collusion with vehicle owners. Legal action has been sought against Ahmed and the vehicle owners concerned.

Ahmed and unnamed vehicle owners have been charged under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Further investigation is ongoing, officials said.

Rajajinagar records 95% waste segregation at source

BENGALURU, DHNS: Rajajinagar assembly constituency has achieved 95 per cent waste segregation at source, said Karigowda, Chief Executive Officer of Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML).

The level is far above the city's average of around 50 per cent.

The constituency, which comes under the Bengaluru City West Corporation, comprises seven wards.

"Initially, segregation levels stood at just 61 per cent. Through sustained efforts and public participation, the constituency has now recorded 95 per cent segregation," he said, adding there are 14 compactors, 137 auto tippers, 274 drivers and helpers, and 347 pourakarmikas.

Rajajinagar MLA S Suresh Kumar appreciated the officers and staff involved in solid waste management.

"Securing the top position within the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) limits is a matter of pride. I thank all the residents for their cooperation," Kumar said.

Karigowda appealed to residents to continue extending their cooperation to help achieve 100 per cent segregation in the coming months.

The segregation levels in other assembly constituencies is not known yet.

V-Day drug-rape case: 3 held for aiding suspects

BENGALURU, DHNS: Three more suspects have been arrested for allegedly drugging and raping a 19-year-old college student at a rented villa in Jakkur.

Bengaluru police on Sunday said the arrests relate to the Valentine's Day incident on the city's outskirts.

Police identified the arrested suspects as Shravan, 21, from Shivamogga; Anirudh, 33, from Davangere; and Mohit Jain, 23, from Gujarat.

"They have been arrested for aiding the two prime suspects in many ways, including dropping off party invitations, booking locations and handling logistics. They are not accused of sexual assault," a senior police officer told *DH*.

On February 27, police announced the arrest of Dixon Syantra, 21, from West Bengal, and Nikhil, 34, from Hassan, for drugging and raping the woman. A day before her complaint, the two approached the Malleswaram police station and accused the woman of attempting extortion by making false accusations.

Rumours also circulated that the villa where the offence occurred belonged to a Karnataka police officer. A separate investigation is ongoing.

BMS College of Commerce and Management (BMSCCM), in association with BMS Evening College and BMS Academy, hosted 'Samskruthi 2026', an intercollegiate management and cultural festival, on February 27 and 28, 2026. The event was graced by Kannada actor Kichcha Sudeep, Dr BS Ragini Narayan, Donor Trustee and Member Secretary of BMS Educational Trust, along with Aviram Sharma, Chairman, and Dr Pankaj Choudhary, Principal of BMSCCM.

Jewellery shop worker arrested for fleeing with Rs 33.5L in gold

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bharathi Nagar police have arrested a 23-year-old man for allegedly cheating a jewellery shop. He pretended to be the owner and took away gold chains.

The accused, Dharmveer Singh alias Pintu, had been absconding for five months, police said. Pintu, a native of Rajasthan, was working at a jewellery shop on Masjid Road.

According to the police, Pintu was tasked with transporting gold ornaments between shops and was familiar with jewellery exchange procedures.

Taking advantage of the shop owner's absence — as he had travelled to Hyderabad — Pintu allegedly approached another shop claiming to represent the owner and collected seven gold chains. He later fled to Rajasthan with the ornaments.

Acting on a tip-off, the police apprehended Pintu and recovered 239 grams of gold ornaments worth Rs 33.5 lakh from his possession.

IN THE CITY

GENERAL

'Kamannana Habba' celebration: Organised by Kamannana Gudi Seva Samithi Trust; Aralapete; 6.30 pm.

CITY WEATHER

FORECAST
Partly cloudy sky

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	32.0°C
Minimum	20.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	NA
Sunset (Mar 2)	6:28 pm
Sunrise (Mar 3)	6:36 am
Moonrise	4:41 am
Moonset	4:51 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Need a hand? Write to us

Letters of grievances are pouring in and we are doing our best to accommodate as many as possible. Readers may write in to highlight civic problems affecting their locality and we will help address them in an interactive and effective manner.

Grievances and issues related to public utility agencies such as Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) and Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (Bescom) would be highlighted in the weekly column.

The writeups, which could be accompanied by photographs highlighting the problems, will be published on Mondays. Mail your grievances to: peoplesproblems @deccanherald.co.in

Large bolts installed a year ago continue to pose a hazard to road users and pedestrians, causing injuries.

Dangerous bolts in VV Puram

Large bolts installed in VV Puram about a year ago pose a serious threat to road users. We have witnessed minor incidents of people tripping and getting bruised. The presence of educational institutions and hospitals in the vicinity make these streets ever busy.

If these spikes are installed with a purpose, please complete them. But if they were installed by mistake, remove them. Why wait for an avoidable danger to happen?
Viswanatha HK,
AG's Layout,
RMV 2nd Stage

Recycle used cooking oil

The IOC Panipat refinery is producing Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) from used cooking oils. SAF is a valuable addition to conventional aviation fuel made from crude oil at other refineries.

It would be worthwhile for civic authorities to arrange the collection of used cooking oil from households in old cans, alongside the regular wet and dry waste, on a monthly basis.

An average Indian household consumes 4 to 5 litres of cooking oil each month. Instead of disposing of it in gutters, this oil can be recycled.

The civic body could trade the collected used cooking oil with IOC, creating both environmental and economic benefits.
Gopinath S,
Poorna Pragna Layout,
Banashankari 3rd Stage

Safe bus stop in Padmanabhanagar

Padmanabhanagar, a fully developed residential layout, currently lacks a proper and safe BMTC bus stop.

At present, buses halt on the main road near SLV Hotel, creating a hazardous situation for pedestrians attempting to cross.

It is essential to relocate the bus stop to a safer location immediately. A large vacant area, previously occupied by the BSNL office, would serve as a convenient and secure alternative.
SG Prabhakar,
Padmanabhanagar

'Efforts under way to bring back stranded people'

CHIKKAMAGALURU, PTI: Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Sunday said the Centre was making continuous efforts to ensure the safe return of Indians stranded in the Middle East, describing the situation as "volatile".

Speaking to reporters at Rambhapuri Mutt in Chikkamagaluru, Joshi said he would take up the matter with the concerned authorities in New Delhi. "The situation there is very difficult. It has come to my attention that Kannada people are stranded," he said.

Noting that the government was closely monitoring developments, he said, "I will go to Delhi today and talk to the concerned ministers. All efforts will be made to bring back the Indians there safely." "Currently, the situation there is turbulent. Even flying a plane there is dangerous," Joshi added.

Ballari MLA, residents stranded in Dubai

As many as 32 people from Ballari, including Ballari City MLA Bharath Reddy, are stranded in Dubai in the wake of the war. Fortunately, all of them are safe and sound, confirmed Ballari Deputy Commissioner Nagendra Prasad.

Sindhanur-based paediatrician Dr K Shivaraj, who had left for Dubai along with his wife to receive an award, and around 50 tourists from Ballari, Chitradurga and Davanagere, who were on a five-day trip to UAE, are stranded in the country.

92 Kannadigas stuck in West Asia, state activates emergency ops centre

Chief secy urges priority evacuation or spl repatriation

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka has fully activated the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) and all District Emergency Operations Centres (DEOCs) to function round-the-clock in response to the evolving situation in West Asia, officials said on Sunday.

At least 92 people are stranded, including 82 in the UAE and eight in Bahrain.

Authorities said the SEOC and DEOCs are closely monitoring advisories issued by the Ministry of External Affairs and Indian embassies and consulates in the affected countries. The Karnataka resident commissioner has also activated the Karnataka Bhavan team in Delhi to ensure coordination with central agencies.

Helplines and travel advisories issued by Indian missions abroad have been shared with all districts and widely circulated on official social media platforms, including X and WhatsApp, to reach families of those affected. According to data compiled by the SEOC, at least 84 people from Karnataka are currently stranded in UAE, mostly in Dubai.

District-wise figures indicate that Ballari accounts for the highest number at 32, followed by Bengaluru 19, Davangere 8, Chikkamagaluru 5, Kodagu 4, Raichur and Shivamogga 3 each, Kalaburagi, Udupi and Vijayapura 2 each, and Chikkaballapur and Tumakuru one each. Officials said the majority of those stranded in the UAE are tourists. In Bahrain, eight persons from Karnataka have reported being stranded. These include four from Hassan, three from Udupi and one from Kodagu. Officials said they are on employment and visit visas. The details of all 92 stranded individuals have been shared with the Rapid Response Cell of the MEA and the resident commissioner's office for further action.

Authorities said the Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) affecting flight operations in the region will be reviewed on Monday. If instability continues, the restrictions may be extended.

Officials urged families of stranded persons to stay in touch with district authorities and rely only on verified advisories issued by government agencies.

CS writes to Centre

State chief secretary Shalini Rajneesh wrote to the union government to extend all necessary assistance for the safety and well-being of stranded Kannadigas.

In a letter to Ministry of External Affairs secretary Vikram Masri, she made the following requests:

a) Extend all necessary assistance through Indian embassies/consulates to ensure the safety and well-being of Kannadigas presently in conflict zones.

b) Consider arranging priority evacuation or special repatriation measures, if required, for stranded individuals from Karnataka and elsewhere.

c) Establish a dedicated coordination mechanism with the state government to facilitate timely information-sharing and effective response.

She said the state government would designate nodal offices to coordinate with the ministry for streamlined communication and facilitation of return arrangements.

In a separate letter to Samir Kumar Sinha, secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, the state's topmost official sought urgent intervention for the rescue of tourists who are unable to return due to flight disruptions.

Urging coordination with airlines, she urged the ministry to provide necessary assistance, including complimentary boarding and lodging, to stranded tourists who had confirmed return bookings, but are unable to travel.

She also urged flexibility in ticket rescheduling and waiver of additional charges, and arranging and operating adequate flights once the situation normalises.

Munish Moudgil, relief commissioner and principal secretary, disaster management department, urged people from Karnataka to strictly adhere to the guidelines and advisories issued by local governments, contact Indian embassies/consulates through helplines and register on Sarthi Sahayata portal and other official portals of the concerned embassies/consulates. For visa-related matters, they should contact the nearest FRRO.

Separately, the Bengaluru Urban district administration has initiated measures to ensure the safety and rescue of residents from the district who may be stranded.

Jagadeesha G, deputy commissioner, has requested family members or concerned individuals to provide information regarding the well-being of such residents to the district disaster management centre for necessary action.

Affected individuals or their relatives can share information by phone: call 080-22967200 or WhatsApp 810599707/9538047199.

HELPLINES

INDIAN EMBASSIES

ISRAEL **+972-54-7520711**	WhatsApp: **+971 5430 90571**
IRAN **+98 912 810 9115, +98 912 810 9109, +98 912 810 9102, +98 993 217 9359**	QATAR **00974-55647502**
SAUDI ARABIA RIYADH **00-966-11-4884697 00-966-542126748** (WhatsApp) **800 247 1234 (Toll-Free)**	BAHRAIN **00973-39418071**
JEDDAH: WhatsApp: **+966 536209704** **Landline: 00 966 126648660 00 966 12 2614093**	JORDAN **00962-770 422 276**
Mobile: **+966 556122301** Toll-Free: **800 244 0003**	OMAN Toll-Free: **8007 1234** WhatsApp: **+968 9828 2270**
UAE Toll-Free: **800-46342**	IRAQ **+964 771 651 1185** (English & Hindi) **+964 770 444 4899** (Arabic)
	KUWAIT **+965 65501946**
	PALESTINE **+970 592916418**

Uncertainty in the air as airlines cancel 16 flights at B'luru airport

Passengers bound for Gulf, European cities stranded

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

Escalating tensions in West Asia following the outbreak of the Iran-Israel war have sent shockwaves through international travel, leaving hundreds of passengers at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in the lurch.

On Sunday, at least 16 flights predominantly bound for Gulf and European cities were cancelled as several countries moved to shut down their airspaces.

The cancellations, which began early Sunday morning, have affected flights to Dubai, Jeddah, Doha, Abu Dhabi and London.

With major carriers like Emirates, Qatar Airways, Air India, Air India Express and IndiGo suspending operations to West Asia, the terminal witnessed scenes of confusion and despair as families, including young children and the elderly, were forced to turn back.

Chaos at counters

At the Air India Express counter, long queues of anxious travellers sought clarity on their bookings. Many had arrived at the airport on Saturday night, only to find their flights grounded indefinitely.

"We were supposed to fly to London via a Gulf connection. We've been here since last night, and now they tell us the airspace is closed. It's a complete deadlock," said a traveller from the UK who was among several foreigners caught in the disruption.

Another passenger, Rashid Khan, who was scheduled to fly to Abu Dhabi, expressed his frustration.

"The authorities say flights won't resume till there's a ceasefire. My office and my life are there, but now I'm told to just take a refund and go home. How does that help my job?"

A help desk has been set up at Terminal 2 to provide real-time updates and 'passenger advisories' to those arriving without prior information.

To mitigate the hardships of those stranded overnight, Air India and other carriers provided food packets and refreshments. Rows of passengers were seen resting on airport seating, holding breakfast bags provided by the airline staff.

An Air India desk staffer clarified the policy for affected flyers. "We are offering full refund or free reschedule for same PNR. However, since this is a security issue and not an airline-specific technical failure, we are not providing hotel accommodation. Passengers will be notified via call centres once airspaces reopen".

With no immediate end to conflict in sight, a spokesperson at the airport suggested that westbound international travel may remain uncertain for the coming week, as airlines continue to reroute or suspend services to ensure passenger safety.

Int'l flights cancelled from Mangaluru

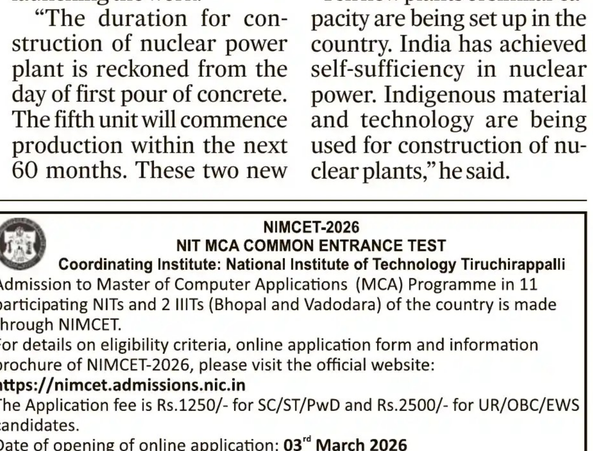
International flights operating between Mangaluru International Airport and key destinations in West Asia were cancelled on Sunday and also on Monday (March 2), following the closure of many airspaces in the region.

Airport authorities confirmed that services to Jeddah, Muscat, Dubai, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi were among those affected.

Flights cancelled on March 2 are IX814 (Dubai to Mangaluru), IX842 (Bahrain to Mangaluru) and IXR16 (Abu Dhabi–Mangaluru).

To assist affected passengers, the airport has arranged additional seating facilities at the kerbside area. Airline staff were seen coordinating with travelers regarding rescheduling and further updates.

Passengers have been advised to check with their respective airlines for the latest flight status before proceeding to the airport.



An airline counter at the terminal 2 of the KIA witnessed long queues of anxious travellers on Sunday.
DH PHOTO/ ASHWIN B M

Prayers mark Shia mourning for Khamenei's death in B'luru

MLA Haris calls war a struggle for dominance that disregards sanctity of life

PUSHKAR V AND ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

Members of the Shia community gather to offer condolences and prayers following the death of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in Bengaluru on Sunday. DH PHOTOS/PUSHKAR V

Hundreds of Shia community members gathered near Masjid-e-Askari in Richmond Town on Sunday to mourn the death of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a US-Israeli airstrike.

The gathering was organised at short notice after news of his death began circulating early Sunday morning.

Men, women and children assembled in large numbers and later marched from the mosque to the nearby Shia Muslim cemetery. Many carried photographs of the late leader while prayers were offered in his memory.

Several women were seen weeping as others stood in silence, shock and anger, reflecting the grief felt across the community.

The gathering, which began as a solemn condolence meeting, quickly turned into a demonstration against the ongoing war.

Richmond Town is home to a large Shia Muslim population and is also known for hosting one of Bengaluru's largest Muharram gatherings each year.

Local MLA N A Haris visited the spot to express solidarity with the mourners.

Haris emphasised that the struggle witnessed globally today is less about religion and more about a ruthless pursuit of power.

"We have gathered here today in grief. A leader has been sacrificed, and while the political reasons may be complex, the impact on human life is clear," he told *DH*.

"The world claims to be progressing, but are we losing our humanity? Whether it is a superpower or a small nation, the priority must be to uphold human rights and peace. What we are seeing today is a struggle for dominance that disregards the sanctity of life."

The mourners, from the Neelasandra and Anepalya areas, raised concerns about the war. Local community leaders expressed anguish, noting that the targeted leader had often stood for the rights of the oppressed.

"We held a meeting to grieve the loss of innocent lives. Over 2,000 people gathered today and we will observe a 40-day mourning period and condemn this act, in which innocents are suffering. It is devastating that 86 schoolchildren were killed, and the count is still rising," Central Relief Committee chairman Aga Sultan told *DH*.

One attendee said: "We learnt of the death of our beloved leader early this morning and wanted to gather to show our solidarity and mourn together".

Another community member condemned the US-Israeli actions. "The world's silence over the killing of such a respected leader is deeply painful. This is not just a loss for Iran, but for Shia communities across the world," he stated.

A woman at the gathering, struggling to hold back tears, said, "We are deeply saddened and shocked. He was not just a political leader, but a spiritual guide for many of us".

The meeting concluded with special prayers for the deceased and a collective call for an end to the violence currently ravaging the Middle East.

Community members said they plan to hold more such gatherings and prayer meetings in the coming days to honour his memory and express their grief.

The residents of Shia-dominated Alipur village in Chikkaballapur mourn the demise of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, on Sunday. DH PHOTO

Chikkaballapur village grieves death of Iran's leader

CHIKKABALLAPUR, DHNS: The residents of the Shia-dominated Alipur, a nondescript village in Gauribidanur taluk of Chikkaballapur district mourned the death of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei by shedding tears and expressing anguish against the joint strike by the United States and Israel, calling for a revenge.

Thousands of residents, mostly from the Shia community, donning black clothes and holding black flags gathered in front of the mosque following a protest call given by Anjuman e Jafria committee. They offered prayers at the mosque, recited Quran holding the posters of Ali Khamenei. They took out a protest march from the mosque to Syed Mustafa Hussain Circle, raising slogans and singing in praise of the Iranian supreme leader.

The village wore a deserted look as shops and commercial establishments voluntarily closed. In view of protest march, the police security was beefed up in Alipur

The Shia village is observing a three-day mourning from Sunday to pay tribute to the supreme leader of the community.

Alipur has a Shia population of over 25,000 while the neighbouring Pothenahalli has over 1,000 Shia Muslims.

According to villagers, Ali Khamenei visited Alipura in 1986, following an invitation. After that visit, the bond between the village and Iran strengthened significantly, they said. A hospital was later built in the village in his name, symbolising the community's respect and reverence for Khamenei.

Many families in the village are worried about the well-being of the children who are living in the war-torn Iran for higher education and employment.

Safety of Kannadigas in Middle East top priority: CM

BENGALURU, PTI: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said the state government was closely monitoring the evolving situation in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and was taking all steps to ensure the safety of Kannadigas residing in the region.

Siddaramaiah

Siddaramaiah said he has held consultations with the Resident Commissioner in New Delhi and directed officials to take proactive measures to safeguard the people from the state living in the region.

"In light of the ongoing conflict between Israel and Iran, the Government of Karnataka is treating with utmost seriousness the safety and well-being of Kannadigas residing in the Middle East, including Israel, the UAE, Iran, and Qatar," he said in a post on 'X'.

"I urge family members not to panic if communication with their loved ones is temporarily disrupted. Please be assured that the safety of every Kannadiga is our foremost priority, and coordinated efforts are already underway in close liaison with the concerned authorities," he added.

Siddu condemns Khamenei's killing, says war unnecessary

Shivamogga, DHNS: Stating that the US President Donald Trump chants the mantra of peace and on the other hand wages war, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Sunday that he would the conflicting stand.

Strongly condemning the killing of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Siddaramaiah said that the war waged by the United States on Iran was unnecessary.

"On one hand, Trump talks about peace, on the other hand, he wages war. I strongly condemn this conflicting stand. I got to know from media that Khamenei has been killed. I strongly condemn this and pray that his soul attains eternal peace," the CM told reporters at the airport.

Shivakumar flays US-Israel attack on Iran

BENGALURU, DHNS: Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Sunday condemned the attack by US and Israel on Iran, and hoped 'humanity triumphs'.

Speaking to reporters, Shivakumar lashed out at the attack by US and Israel on an Iranian school, which killed over 80 schoolchildren. "The war in Middle East is not right. Why attack schoolchildren who are at no fault? This is condemnable. It is time to rescue Indians stuck in Dubai and other parts of the Middle East." The deputy CM urged the Centre to rescue Kannadigas, Keralites and Indians from other states.

"Our MLAs A C Srinivasa, Bharat Reddy, his family, and MLC Bhoje Gowda are stranded in Dubai," he said.

Noting that Kannada organisations in Middle East must give confidence to those stuck, he said: "We need peace in the world. I pray for no casualties. Hope humanity triumphs. Gangadhar Ajjaiah has said world peace is possible only by universal humanity. The US must stop the war. It can negatively impact India".

D K Shivakumar

Work begins on 5th, 6th unit at Kaiga nuclear power plant

KARWAR, DHNS: The first pour of concrete for the construction of fifth and sixth unit of the Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant in Karwar began on Sunday with Atomic Energy Commission chairperson Ajit Kuma Mohanty launching the work.

"The duration for construction of nuclear power plant is reckoned from the day of first pour of concrete. The fifth unit will commence production within the next 60 months. These two new units will be one of the safest nuclear installations in the world," Mohanty said. He said that both the units will have an installed capacity of 700 MW each.

New plants across India

"Ten new plants of similar capacity are being set up in the country. India has achieved self-sufficiency in nuclear power. Indigenous material and technology are being used for construction of nuclear plants," he said.

NIMCET-2026
NIT MCA COMMON ENTRANCE TEST
Coordinating Institute: National Institute of Technology Tiruchirappalli
Admission to Master of Computer Applications (MCA) Programme in 11 participating NITs and 2 IIITs (Bhopal and Vadodara) of the country is made through NIMCET.
For details on eligibility criteria, online application form and information brochure of NIMCET-2026, please visit the official website:
https://nimcet.admissions.nic.in
The Application fee is Rs.1250/- for SC/ST/PwD and Rs.2500/- for UR/OBC/EWS candidates.
Date of opening of online application: **03rd March 2026**
Date of closing of online application : **01st May 2026**
Date of Examination: 6th June 2026 (Saturday)
Coordinator, NIMCET-2026

SI collapses, dies during 5-km run in Udupi

UDUPI, DHNS: A police sub-inspector allegedly collapsed and died while participating in a Karnataka Police Run organised by the Udupi district Police in the city on Sunday morning.

The deceased was identified as Naseer Hussain, a sub-inspector attached to the Kundapura Rural Police Station.

He was taking part in the 5-km run organised under the theme "Our Police, Our Pride" to promote physical fitness, a drug-free Karnataka, and cyber awareness.

The event was held at the Ajjarakadu Grounds and saw participation from hundreds of police personnel from across the district.

Collapsed on the track

According to sources, while running in the 5-km run, SI Naseer Hussain suddenly collapsed on the track and fell sick.

He was immediately rushed to a private hospital in the city for treatment. However, doctors declared him brought dead after examination.

He had served in Amasebailu, Kundapura town, Kundapura Traffic, Shankaranarayana, Karkala Rural Police stations.

Govt jobs: Madiga leaders to urge CM to resolve quota knot

To press for 6% for SC Left within 15% reservation basket

BENGALURU, DHNS

A delegation of SC (left)/Madiga leaders is expected to meet Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday and urge him to implement internal reservation within the 15% cap for Scheduled Castes while recruiting candidates for 56,432 government jobs.

The delegation is expected to include Congress veterans like K H Muniyappa, R B Timmapur, H Anjaneya and L Hanumanthaiah. The proposed meeting comes after a government order sought to recruit as per the reservation order that was in force before December 28, 2022 (15% for SCs and 3% for STs), effectively implying that this massive recruitment drive will not include internal reservation.

Though the previous BJP government enhanced the reservation share for SCs from 15% to 17% and for STs from 3% to 7%, it was only in August 2024 that the Supreme Court empowered states to provide internal reservation.

Speaking to *DH*, Anjaneya - a former social welfare minister - explained that they were seeking a 6% share for the Madigas within the 15% reservation basket.

"They must implement internal reservation for these 56,432 jobs. All the hitherto committees and commissions (Justice A J Sadashiva Commission, J C Madhuswamy Committee and Justice H N Nagamohan Das Commission) have recommended 6% reservation for Madigas in both internal reservation matrices (15% and 17%). So, they have to give us (Madigas) 6%."

Basavaraj Kowthal, convenor of the Committee for Internal Reservation for Social Justice, explained that activists from the Madiga community were gearing up for a protest on March 11.

Legal hurdles

However, there are differences among the SC ministers in the Cabinet. A minister from the SC community told *DH* that legal hurdles prevented the government from providing internal reservation when recruitment is made under the earlier 15% quota.

"This is a catch-22 situation for us. The Supreme Court has mandated that internal reservation must be based on empirical data. While we had data and studies to defend the internal reservation decision for 17% reservation, we cannot blindly implement internal quota for 15% - it will be challenged in the courts and struck down. We are committed to internal reservation and have passed an Act also, but it will be for subsequent recruitments," the minister said.

As per the Cabinet decision on February 26, the state government will recruit 56,432 jobs within 30 days by following the earlier matrix of 50% reservation, subject to the High Court's final decision.

Till then, 94 out of 100 jobs will be recruited (2 jobs for SCs and 4 jobs for STs will be kept on hold till the final decision of the High Court). If the decision is in favour of the SC and ST Reservation Act, 2022, those 6 posts will be allotted to the SCs and STs (2 for SCs and 4 for STs). If not, those jobs will go to the general category.

No one can divide Veerashaivas and Lingayats, says Eshwar Khandre

BENGALURU, DHNS: Forest Minister and All India Veerashaiva Mahasabha president Eshwar Khandre on Sunday reiterated the Mahasabha's longstanding position that the Veerashaivas and Lingayats were inseparable.

"Our community, which has a very rich culture and heritage, is currently at the crossroads. No matter how much any force may try, it's impossible to separate Veerashaivas and Lingayats. Strength is in unity, not in division. If we are united, we can work for uplifting everyone in the community," he said while speaking during the birth anniversary of Adi Jagadguru Renukacharya and the Yugamanotsava of Jagadguru Panchacharya.

His comments assume significance as some Lingayat leaders within the Congress have sought a separate religion status for Lingayats alone and not Veerashivas. While the Mahasabha has also sought a separate religion status, it has maintained all along that the Lingayats and Veerashaivas should remain united.

"I have been made the national president of the All India Veerashaiva Mahasabha through confidence. I will honestly endeavour to achieve the noble intentions of the Mahasabha," Khandre noted.

The forest minister was chosen as the Mahasabha president after the demise of Congress veteran and the then Mahasabha president Shamanur Shivashankarappa on December 14, 2025.

PU student killed in elephant attack

MADIKERI, DHNS: A 17-year-old pre-university student died in an elephant attack at Bettathoor in Madikeri taluk on Saturday night.

The deceased is Pooja, daughter of Girish Chengappa. She was a I PU student at St Michael College in Madikeri.

As it was holiday, she had been to her native. She got down from the bike her father was riding and was walking towards her home when the elephant charged at her. Though severely injured Pooja was rushed to hospital, she breathed her last en route, said DCF Abhishek. Local residents staged a protest by blocking the road at Made for a while. Forest officials said that a herd of three elephants was moving in the area.

Woman drowns while trekking

UDUPI, DHNS: A 53-year-old woman drowned in a river while trekking near the Bhagimane area of Hosangady on Sunday. The deceased has been identified as Shubhashree Karanth, a medical shop owner from Kundapura.

According to preliminary information, she was part of a group of 8–10 people from Kundapura, who had gone trekking towards Metkal Gudda. During the trek, Shubhashree reportedly slipped and fell into the water, leading to her drowning. Her body was later recovered and shifted to the government hospital in Kundapura for post-mortem.

The Amasebailu police visited the spot.

State needs 'Right to Health' guarantee, urge activists

BENGALURU, DHNS: Health for All, Karnataka, has flagged severe shortages in human resources and infrastructure gaps in the state's public healthcare system and has demanded a new legislation to guarantee the Right to Health in Karnataka.

In a memorandum submitted to Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the forum cited its findings from a 2025 RTI-based study conducted across 11 districts assessing staffing, infrastructure and service delivery in government health facilities.

While the vacancies in government and general hospitals stand at 45.6%, it is 42.6% in CHCs and 30% in PHCs. Nearly 52% of sub-centres lack medical officers, while 41.7% of PHCs face shortages of nursing staff, forcing several institutions to depend on contractual and AYUSH staff, the study said.

The forum also noted that patient load in government hospitals has sharply increased in recent years; in Belagavi district alone, patient numbers reportedly rose from 34.9 lakh to 74.5 lakh over five years.

Yadgir faces a 28.5% shortage of sub-centres and has only 36 PHCs against the required 43, while Davangere district has just four CHCs against a requirement of 19. Across surveyed districts, only 53.4% of sub-centres function in government-owned buildings.

The forum further pointed out that although the Karnataka State Health Policy (2004) recommends allocating 10% of total state expenditure to health, the current allocation remains below 6%, with nearly one-fourth of the budget spent on insurance schemes instead of strengthening public facilities.

Calling for a legal guarantee to healthcare on the lines of Rajasthan, the forum urged a statewide recruitment drive, revision of the State Health Policy and strengthening of government-run health institutions.

THE FEDERAL BANK LIMITED
Regd. Office: Aluva, Kerala.

ZONAL OFFICE: 2nd Floor, Halcyon Complex, No.9, St Marks Road, Bangalore-560 001.
e-mail: bgrr-cpc@federalbank.co.in Phone: 080-22074610/604/613/624/625

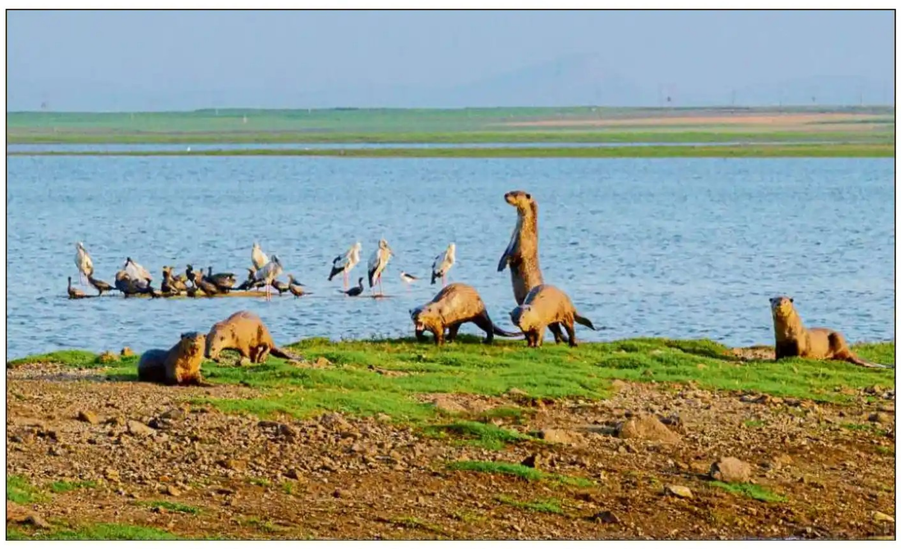
BGRR/PvtSale/Q4/2025-26 NOTICE FOR PRIVATE SALE OF GOLD 26/02/2026

Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold Ornaments pledged in the following Gold Loan accounts, with the under mentioned Branches of the Bank, which are overdue for redemption and which have not been regularized so far in spite of repeated notices, will be put for Private sale, in the respective Branches on any date after 10-03-2026 as shown below:

Br. Bangalore/Balagaranahalli: Sy. No. 33/2, Balagaranahalli, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore- 562 107, Ph:080 27820090:- 21706400054133.
Br. Bangalore/Jaya Nagar: K M Plaza, Kanakapura Main Road, 30th Cross, 7th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore- 560 082, Ph. No. 080-26655558 :- 13876900008317,13876100393956,13876400095129,13876900004555,13876100389160,13876100389392,13876400096390,13876900004944,13876500026859, 13876400099857,13876900005412,13876900005438,13876900006493,13876900004787,13876900006105,13876900006618,13876900007715,13876500028707, 13876100395928,13876100396710,13876900009125,13876900009018,13876900007350,13876100395803,13876100395886,13876100395894,13876100395936, 13876100396652,13876900007467. **Br. Bangalore/Koramangala: No. 7, Maruthi Arcade, 20th Main Road, 7th Block, Koramangala, Bangalore--560 095, Ph. 080-25717733 :-** 14376400046163,14376100134731,14376100136017,14376100136298,14376900006089,14376900003383,14376500013451, 14376400049449,14376400049456,14376400049464,14376400049738,14376400049746,14376400049662,14376400049670,14376400049688,14376900003805, 14376900005008,14375600007777,14375600009658,14375600002554,14376400048110,14376400048235,14376900007889,14376900006576.
Br. Bangalore/Marathahalli: No.43, Varthur Main Road, Marathahalli, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 037, Ph. No. 080-25400111 :- 14546100140926,14546900004306,14546900008844,14546400060774,14546400058729,14546900004017,14546900004819,14546900002276,14546900003068, 14546900004660,14546900003092,14546400055006,14546900002573,14546400062408,14546400059560,14546400060840,14546900005816,14546400060121, 14546400059552,14546900004272,14546900004280,14546900004298,14546900005352,14546900005360,14546400060915,14546400060097,14546400060105, 14546400060493,14546900005782,14546900004199,14546500005745,14546100140991. **Br. Bangalore/Bannergatta: Limra Towers, Kemmanaikanahalli, Bannergatta, Bangalore Urban-560 083. Ph. No. 080 27828224 :-** 15716400203521,15716400197624,15716400171991, 15716400200071,15716400168799,15716400163733,15716400205021,15716400205278,15716400205625,15716100167273,15716400173195,15716100162514, 15716400196691,15716400202135,15716400198473,15716400202218,15716400205013,15716400199018,15716100167018,15716100167083,15716100163959.
Br. Bangalore/Basavanagudi: 20/1, Ground Floor, Shri Mallikarjuna Nilaya, Prof.B S Madhava Rao Circle, Basavanagudi, Bangalore- 560 004, Ph. No. 080 26571530 :- 13185600005841,13185600005809,13186900004757,13186900006521,13185600005973,13185600005981,13186900004955, 13185600005825,13185600005833,13185600006120. **Br. Bangalore/H S R Layout : No.19, 15th Cross, 15th Main, Sector IV, H S R Layout, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 102, Ph. No. 080 25724492 :-** 17696100277579,17695600002172,17696900006780,17696900003225,17695600002149, 17695600002164,17695600002214,17696900007069,17695600002032,17696400040818,17696400042673,17696400042798.
Br. Bangalore/J P Nagar : No.13, 15th Cross, 100ft Ring Road, 6th Phase, J P Nagar, Bangalore- 560 078,Ph No. 080 26549292 :- 18276800160695,18276800160703,18276400094567,18276400094575,18276400094633,18276400099285,18276400099293,18276900001336,18276400093619, 18276400093627,18276400098360,18276400098345,18276400098352,18276400098527,18276400088742,18276400090144,18276400098535,18276900006467, 18276900002714,18276400094849,18276400089898,18276400094658,18276400096117,18276900006608,18276900006541,18276400097347,18276400092827, 18276400092843,18276400098105,18276900006418,18276900003019,18276800167567,18276800160711,18276900003902,18276900003910.
Br. Bangalore/Banashankari: Sudhama, No.299, 100ft. Ring Road, 4rh Phase, 7th Block, Banashankari 3rd Stage, Bangalore-560085,Ph. 080-26691593:- 17816900004896,17816400089827,17816400090031,17816900006289,17816900002007,17816100362664,17816900002346,17816900000720,17816900004730, 17816900002312,17816900005844,17816400089819,17816400091054,17816900006586,17816900006321,17816900002932,17816800062143,17816900006438, 17816400090197,17816900001421,17816900005984,17816900006396,17816400086666,17816400089413,17816400090866,17816400091617,17816900006131, 17816400089744,17816900002197,17816400089009,17816400075131,17816900004524,17816900005919,17816900001173,17816400091377.
Br. Wipro Park, Koramangala: Annapoorna Complex, Opp. Wipro Park, No 6,7th Main, 80 Feet Road, 3rd Block, Koramangala PO, Bangalore-560034, Ph. No. 080-25504450 :- 21996900001169,21996900000740,21996900000831,21996100040595,21996900002886,21996400059360,21996900001854, 21996900001094,21996900002936,21996100040041,21996900003082,21995600000885,21996100040710,21996100041023,21996900002597,21996800034450, 21996400061788,21996400062216,21996900001144,21996900000724,21996400054916,21996900002282,21995600000919,21996800034328.
Br. Bangalore/Raja Rajeswari Nagar: Nitai Gaur Complex,No: 692, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, BEML 5th stage,Rajarajeswari Nagar, Bengaluru- 560 098 :- 23455600000227,23456400012529,23455600000250,23456500005670. **Br. Bangalore/Varthur: Khata No. 3364/60/3#1/1, EL Bethel Church Compound, Christhesu Nagar, Varthur, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 087:-** 23836100000801,23836400003893.
Br. Bangalore / Thalaghattapura: No. 7, Arya Heights, Opp to Police Station, Kanakapura Main Road, Thalaghattapura, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 109, Ph. No. 9955818481 :- 23826300018596,23826300018687,23826300018703,23826300018729,23826300018976,23826300019016, 23826300019032,23826300019073,23826300019123,23826300019164,23826300019362,23826300019479,23826300019792,23826300019941,23826300020048, 23826300020105,23826300020394,23826300020964,23826300021236,23826300021251,23826300021293.
Br. Bangalore / Bannerghatta IIMB : Door No. 108/7, Ground floor, Doresanipalya, Bannerghetta Road, Arekere, Bangalore- 560 076 :- 24566400009173,24566900000573,24566400010098,24566900001548,24566900001688,24566900001696.
Br. Bangalore/Vidyapeeta Circle: #279, 80 feet Road, 2nd block, 6 A Cross, Banashankari 1st stage, Srinivas Nagar, Bangalore-560050:- 25736800000580,25736800000598,25736800000697,25736800000846,25736800000960,25736900000035,25736900000183,25736400002291,25736900000027, 25736900000357,25735600000022,25736400002408. **Br. Billapura: Sy. No.20, Thyvakanahally, Sarjapur - Attibele Road, Bangalore- 562 125 :-** 21666100013120,21666400052356,21666400052422,21666400054089,21666400053172,21666400053180,21666400052364, 21666400051432,21666100015729,21666400046150,21666400053396,21666400052323,21666400052489,21666400051853.
Br. Kengeri: Building No 737, Kommaghatta main road, Kengeri satellite town, Bangalore Urban- 560 060 :- 19646400209952,19646400202577,19646400204813,19646400210174,19646400209416,19646400203138,19646400191911,19646400187307,19646400169180, 19646400200290,19646400200357,19646400203120,19646400206362,19646400206370,19646900001586,19646400190103,19646400190525,19646400201900, 19646100142487,19646900001875,19646400204474,19646400207055,19646900001024,19646900001032,19646400207857,19646900001768,19646400186051, 19646400208558,19646400209390,19646400187323,19646400203658,19646400206248,19646400200647,19646400201934,19646400209960,19646400210166, 19646400214325,19645600001326,19645600001334,19645600001342,19646400200274,19646400210018,19646400210422,19646400210430,19646900000695.
Br. Kodathi Gate: St. Patrick Academy Campus, Sarjapur Road, Carmelaram P O, Bangalore- 560 035, Ph: 08028441020 :- 21716100033170,21716400103210,21716400131617,21716400126534,21716400126898,21716400132581,21716100029459,21716400132680, 21716400134389,21716400127425,21716400132243,21716100033105,21716400130940,21716400132060,21716400131195,21716400134371,21716900001195, 21716400131534,21716400132870. **Br. Surya Nagar: K H No 165/1 & 166/1, First Floor, Banajappa Building, B.Nanjappa Layout, Suryanagar 1st Phase, Banahall, Chandapura, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 081 Ph. No. 09986031773 :-** 21686100070995,21686400054608,21686100070888,21686400054533,21686400054632,21686900000481.
Br. Thirumalasettyhalli: SY No.84, Thirumalasettyhalli Village, Samethanahalli P.O, Bangalore Rural - 560067, Ph: 080 28549041 :- 22626100015367,22626900001476,22626400080350,22626900001161,22626400080491,22626900000965,22626400081390,22626400080533,22626400080236, 22626400081903,22626400080079,22626900000593,22626900006707,22626400083206,22626400081200,22626100016696,22626400078040,22626400080020, 22626900003555,22626400080814,22626400079907,22626400080889,22626400080145,22626900008745,22626900012655.
Br. Taverekere: No.104/1, Ground Floor, Chocolate Factory Road, 1st Main, Taverekere, Bangalore Urban, Karnataka- 560 029 :- 16596400075932,16596400086152,16596400098116,16596400097258,16595600002365,16596400105580,16596400102843,16596400102850,16596400076955, 16596100286920,16596400081278,16596100282374,16596400084546,16596400104997,16596400106208,16596400098330,16596400106505,16596900001859, 16596400105598,16596400106216. **Br. Visweswaraya Layout: Site No. 2, 4th Block, Visweswaraya Layout, Manganahalli, Ullal Upanagara P O, Bangalore- 560110 :-** 21676400064749,21676400064756,21676900000870,21676400064707,21676400066397,21676400064475, 21676400065134,21676400065118,21676400065126,21676400059509,21676400067064.
Br. Bangalore/Thirupalya: Near Electronic City, Hebgodi Post, Thirupalya, Bangalore, Karnataka-560 099, Ph. No. 080-27833335 :- 21126400062954,21126900001288,21126100108891,21126100110772,21126900001429,21126400061196,21126400061923,21126900001577,21126900001585, 21126900001593,21126400062665,21126400062798.
Br. Bidadi: Site No. 342/370, Nelligudda Tank Road, Bidadi, Ramanagara, Karnataka- 562 109 Ph. No. 080-27282383 :- 16706900003991,16706900001862,16706900003850,16706400105403,16706400110452,16706400110460,16706900003744,16706400097709,16706400098798, 16706400112318,16706400112326,16706400105874,16706900001623,16706400110999,16706900003819,16706400101857,16706900002712,16706400109173, 16706400109199,16706400110908,16706400110916,16706900003884,16706900003900,16706400112466,16706400112979,16706900003926,16706400110965, 16706400111187,16706400111708,16706400111724. **Br. Mandya: Kambali Building, Ashoka Nagar, M C Road, Mandya, Karnataka- 571 401, Ph. No. 08232-229339:-** 21446400120317,21446100012665,21446400117222,21446400119426,21446400125043, 21446400125076,21446400122800,21446400128690,21446400128849,21446400129045,21446400128054,21446400128104,21446400128831.
Br. Channapatna: Anugraha Towers, 8th Cross, B M Road, Kuvempunagar, Channapatna, Ramanagara, Karnataka- 562 160, Ph. No. 080-27251885 :- 16486400232438,16486400237544,16486400155787,16486400207752,16486400223999,16486400222744,16486400195171, 16486400223437,16486400230002,16486400229079,16486400229673,16486400237395.
Br. Ramanagara: Opp.Rotary Bgs Global Hospitals, Bangalore-Mysore Road, Ramanagara- 562 159, Ph. No. 080-27276699 :- 16696400078710,16696400119167,16696400119209,16696400119035,16696400109697,16696400118821,16696400124027,16696400129414,16696400129422, 16696400118748,16696400120090,16696900003069,16696400123821,16696400119761,16696400126717,16696400111685,16696400119670,16696400129513, 16696900000529,16696900002285,16696400120504,16696400126857,16696400128572,16696900002590,16696400118326,16696400120520,16696400126725, 16696400124415,16696400117807,16696900006328,16696400123342,16696400122955,16696400119696,16696400119803,16696400130339,16695500017024, 16696400115702,16696400119639,16696400121163,16696400121783,16696900002269,16696900002871.

Bangalore 26-02-2026 Vice President & Zonal Head

OTTERS' DAY OUT



A family of otters in a playful mood in Tungabhandra backwaters at Hyatimundargi in Koppal taluk on Sunday. DH PHOTO/BHARATH KANDAKUR

Public hearing on pumped storage project sidelines thousands of written objections

Activists urge the officials for an overhaul

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) conducted the public hearing in Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada on September 16 and 18, respectively, to obtain the views of the people to the 2000-MW pumped storage project in Sharavathi Valley Lion Tailed Macaque Sanctuary. While both the physical meetings saw thousands of people waiting to speak up against the project, documents obtained under the Right to Information Act reflect a much higher participation.

Yet, the proceedings of the two events now made available to the public, give space for only 47 people in Shivamogga and 57 in Uttara Kannada district to speak against the project.

A careful reading of the proceedings show the written submissions being relegated to a list of annexures. There is no information with regard to the nature of these submissions, with activists noting that this effectively undermines the participation of people who took their time to write their suggestions and objections.

When the public hearing notices were issued last year seeking suggestions and objections to the project, people were told to participate via "oral/written/email" but the proceedings of the events sideline the thousands of written submissions, prompting activists to demand officials for an overhaul.

12k pages of written submissions

In fact, documents obtained under the Right to information Act show that officials were flooded with written submissions. As per the information provided by the KSPCB's Karwar regional office, the written submission exceeded a whopping 11,078 pages in Uttara Kannada while the KSPCB Shivamogga regional officer put the number at 948 pages.

Wildlife conservationist G Veeresh, who participated in the hearing at Shivamogga, noted that thousands of people who could not get time to speak have submitted written objections and it was deeply concerning to see that only oral objections get space in the minutes of meeting.

"The KSPCB has a statutory duty under the EIA Notification to consolidate and record all objections — whether submitted orally, in writing, or through email. Public consultation is not a mere procedural formality; it is a democratic safeguard. We demand full transparency regarding how many people submitted objections, how many supported the project, and how many opposed it. The public has a right to know whether every representation was properly acknowledged and considered," he said.

To a question, KSPCB Member Secretary R Gokul said the Board only facilitates the event.

"Ultimately, it is the district administration which approves the public hearing proceedings. We facilitate the event as per the EIA notification and forward the documents to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change," he said.

Against the project

An official in Uttara Kannada said most of the written submissions were against the project. "We have not held back any of the submissions. Every page has been forwarded to the department," he added.

Apart from an online petition which had about 15,000 signatures by the end of September 16, activists and conservationists had held a signature campaign to gather support for their opposition to the project. All these materials were printed and submitted to the officials during the public hearing but do not get a mention in the proceedings.

Iran talks revenge after...

Iran, From Page 1

"Israel is acting in its own ways" to get Iranians to take to the streets, the official said. In a sign of how the attack could stoke regional unrest, hundreds of people stormed the US Consulate in Pakistan's port city of Karachi on Sunday. Security forces fired tear gas to disperse the crowd, and at least 10 people were killed in the clashes.

Meanwhile, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said in a prerecorded message aired on state television that a new leadership council had begun its work, and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said a new supreme leader would be chosen in "one or two days."

The strikes and counterattacks underscored how the killing of Khamenei, and US President Donald Trump's calls for the overthrow of the decades-old Islamic Republic, carried the potential for a prolonged conflict.

"You have crossed our red line and must pay the price," Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, said in a televised address Sunday. "We will deliver such devastating blows that you yourselves will be driven to beg."

Trump warned that any retaliation would only lead to further escalation.

"THEY BETTER NOT DO THAT," Trump fired back in a social media post. "IF THEY DO, WE WILL HIT THEM WITH A FORCE THAT HAS NEVER BEEN SEEN BEFORE!"

As US and Israeli strikes have pounded Iran, the Islamic Republic has retaliated with missiles and drone attacks on Israel and nearby Arab Gulf countries hosting US forces.

Shrapnel from Iranian attacks on the Emirates' capital of Abu Dhabi killed two people, state media said, and debris from aerial interceptions caused fires at the city's main port and on the facade of the iconic Burj Al Arab hotel. Later in the day, the UAE said was shuttering its embassy in Iran and recalling its ambassador. Attacks also extended into Oman - Iran's longtime interlocutor with the West that hadn't been drawn into the fray previously.

Saudi Arabia condemned Iran's attacks on its capital, Riyadh, and eastern region, saying it had successfully intercepted them. The kingdom noted that it had not allowed its airspace or territory to be used to target Iran.

As reports trickled out about Khamenei's death, eyewitnesses in Tehran told The Associated Press that some residents were rejoicing from rooftops.

The Iranian government has declared 40 days of public mourning and a seven-day nationwide public holiday to commemorate Khamenei's death.

Cops' plan to decongest...

Traffic, from Page 1

While the plan looks good on paper, urban mobility experts urge the GBA to ensure that the new infrastructure is user-friendly.

"Shifting bus stops and building skywalks only works if you don't increase the walking distance for the commuter so much that they start jaywalking again," said an urban mobility expert based in the city. "The 66 MLCPs are a welcome move, but they must be integrated with the 'Suraksha-75' safety spots to ensure people feel safe using them at night."

For the average Bengalurean, the junction friction is a daily nightmare. "The bus stop at the Silk Board Junction or near Tin Factory is the reason why thousands of us are late every day. Shifting them even 100 meters away from the signal would be a big relief," said Sunita R, a regular commuter on the Outer Ring Road.

However, some remain wary of the skywalk proposal. "We have many skywalks in the city that no one uses because the lifts don't work or they are poorly lit. If they build 101 more, they need to ensure they are actually accessible for senior citizens," noted Kumar, a resident of Indiranagar.

Unrest over stadium plan at yarn unit snowballs into crisis for Mysore silk

Don't take sheen off brand shining bright: Officials; staff fear job loss

A Mysore silk showroom on the KSIC factory premises in Mysuru. DH PHOTO

SHILPA P
MYSURU, DHNS

Mysore silk, the Geographical Indication-tagged brand, is not just a fabric, but a heritage, an emotion.

But a plan to build a sports stadium on a 5-acre buffer land of the yarn reeling unit of the Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation (KSIC) at T Narsipur in the district threatens to take the sheen off the silk brand, known for the authenticity, purity and quality of the zari thread used.

KSIC's net profit (after tax) has tripled and production of sarees has almost doubled in the past 5 years, while prices have gone up by 15% in 2 years.

The demand for KSIC's sarees is double the output, thanks to new colours and designs it introduces from time to time.

So, there is huge scope for expansion of KSIC units rather than closing them, say its officials.

Production of sarees has doubled from 280 sarees to 400 sarees per day with an increase in looms from 189 to 319 at the corporation's weaving units at Mysuru and Channapatna (Bengaluru south district).

Prices are up by 15% in the past 2 years, due to the rise in gold and silver prices as the Zari thread has 65% silver and 0.65% gold.

KSIC is adding 20 more looms to produce 60 more sarees per day, according to its managing director Zehera Naseem.

Its general manager (personnel and operations) Uma said, "We purchase about 2,000 kg of cocoons daily, mainly in Shidlagatta, Ramanagar and Kollegal.

The reeling unit in T Narsipur processes this to 250 to 300 kg silk yarn per day. Currently, the Mysuru unit has 229 looms, including mechanical jacquard looms for new design zaris. The finishing happens here. The production of Mysore silk has increased from 1,500-1,700 meters (280 sarees) in 2021 to 2,200 meters per day (400 sarees per day) now".

"KSIC is involving in-house designers and consultant fashion designers to come up with exotic colour combinations and designs of saree borders," KSIC officials said.

In such a scenario, all efforts must be made to increase production, say the corporation's employees.

They said that the proposal by the department of youth empowerment and sports to take over land in the T Narsipur factory for a stadium should be dropped.

They fear the closure of the T Narsipur unit and loss of jobs, as the stadium cannot exist next to a 5 tph (tonnes per hour), the 2 tph boilers and the dump yard of cinder ash generated by burning coal at the unit.

The 5 acres of land proposed for the stadium will block the way to transport 5 tonnes of coal per day to the unit. The pipeline from River Cauvery, transporting water to the facility, also passes through this buffer land.

Foreseeing closure of the unit, they say weaving of the famed sarees will come to a halt since there will be no raw material (yarn).

Indian carriers cancel 350 flights...

Flights, from Page 1

The cancellations in Bengaluru, which began early morning, have affected flights to Dubai, Jeddah, Doha, Abu Dhabi and London.

Similarly, international flights operating between Mangaluru and key destinations in West Asia were cancelled on Sunday. Authorities confirmed that services to Jeddah, Muscat, Dubai, Bahrain and Abu Dhabi were among those affected. At least 100 international flights were cancelled at Delhi airport during the day, which included 60 international departures and 40 arrivals. In Mumbai, 125 flights —67 departures and 58 arrivals —were cancelled.

"Due to the evolving political situation in the Middle East, west-bound international flights may experience disruptions or schedule changes," the Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) said.

The four airports in Kerala from where there is a substantial number of fliers to West Asia saw a large number of flight cancellations. The Thiruvananthapuram airport saw 11 flights getting cancelled on Saturday and another 26 on Sunday, while 35 flights were cancelled in Kochi, 10 in Kozhikode and six in Kannur on Sunday.

According to IndiGo website, 166 flights were cancelled on Sunday, while it has announced cancellation of 162 services on Monday and 42 on Tuesday.

Air India has announced cancellation of 22 more international services for Sunday, taking the total number of overseas flight cancellations announced by it so far to 50.

Flights to and from Mumbai-London, Delhi- Birmingham, Delhi-Amsterdam, Delhi-Zurich, Delhi-Milan, Delhi-Vienna and Bengaluru-London (Heathrow) have been cancelled, Air India said. Other cancelled flights are on Delhi to Copenhagen, London and Frankfurt routes.

18 killed in blast at explosives...

Blast, from Page 1

"The incident at the explosives factory in Raulgaon in Nagpur district is extremely unfortunate and tragic," said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The CM ordered a thorough investigation into this incident.

Additionally, he announced an ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased.

Teams of National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, Chief Controller of Explosives of Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation and Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health rushed to the spot.

Nagpur Collector Dr Vipin Itankar and Nagpur Rural Superintendent of Police Dr Harssh Poddar arrived at the spot to oversee the investigation.

State Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule, who is also the Guardian Minister of Nagpur, is overseeing the relief operations.

Reacting to the incident, Katol MLA, Chandrasing Thakur, said, "It is a serious incident. Prima facie, it appears to be due to negligence and flouting of safety norms."

While the exact cause of the blast remains unknown, police noted that the factory produces a wide range of materials, including detonators and emulsion explosives.

ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್ ರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ,
ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು ವಿಭಾಗ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮುಂದೂಡಿಕೆ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:10/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:25.02.2026
ಉಲ್ಲೇಖ:–1.ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 30/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:31.01.2026
ಉಲ್ಲೇಖ:–2.ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 31/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:07.02.2026
ಉಲ್ಲೇಖ:–3 ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಮುಂದೂಡಿಕೆ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:08/2025–26
ದಿನಾಂಕ:12.02.2026

ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಉಲ್ಲೇಖಿತ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು ವಿಭಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು ಉಪವಿಭಾಗಕ್ಕೆ ಒಳಪಡುವ 4059–80–051–0–60–132 ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿಯವರ ಮೂಲಸೌಕರ್ಯ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ ಇತರೆ ಬಂಡವಾಳ ವೆಚ್ಚಗಳು ಲೆಕ್ಕಶೀರ್ಷಿಕೆ ಅಡಿ ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿರುವ ಉಲ್ಲೇಖ (1)ರ ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:30ರಲ್ಲಿ ಕ್ರಮ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : 4 (ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:32545) & 9 (ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ 29376) ರ (ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ವರ್ಗ) ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ & ಉಲ್ಲೇಖ (2)ರನ್ವಯ ಕ್ರಮ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ : 4(ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:29383) ರ (ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯ ವರ್ಗ) ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗೆ ಕೆಪಿಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಉಲ್ಲೇಖ (3) ರಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕವಾಗಿ **25.02.2026 ಎಂದು ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿತ್ತು. ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಕಾರಣಗಳಿಂದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ದಿನಾಂಕವನ್ನು ಮುಂದೂಡಲಾಗಿದ್ದು, ದಿನಾಂಕ:05.03.2026 ಎಂದು ಮರು ನಿಗಧಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.** ಉಳಿದಂತೆ ಯಾವುದೇ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳು ಇರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ.

ಸಹಿ/- ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್, ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು ವಿಭಾಗ, ಚಿಕ್ಕಮಗಳೂರು

No immediate oil jitters for India..

Oil, from Page 1

Iran's state media said February 28 that the Islamic Republic has shut the Strait of Hormuz in response to US and Israeli military strikes.

The closure for a short duration will not have much impact on India as it already has supplies to meet fuel requirement, they said adding in the event of a prolonged disruption or closure of the narrow Strait of Hormuz, the country can recalibrate imports, tapping into its diversified supply sources, including increasing purchases of Russian oil.

"In case Iran were to force the closure for long, the possibility of a military action by the US and other powers in the region to physically take control of the coastal belt from where the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) exercises control of the sea lane, cannot be ruled out," an analyst said.

For now, India is working on the assumption that the closure will be short, lasting less than a week.

"Indian refineries put together hold anywhere between 10 to 15 days of crude inventories, both in tanks and in transit. Besides, all their fuel tanks are full that can easily meet 7-10 days of the country's fuel requirement," an official said. "For now, we think the closure of the Strait of Hormuz will not be very long."

Another official said the world has enough crude oil supplies and India can tap sellers as far as Venezuela and Brazil, besides West Africa and the US.

"India had cut purchases from Russia in response to US pressure but we can go back to buying from Moscow in case there is disruption in the Middle East," he said. "The only question is transit time. It takes 5 days for a ship from the Middle East to travel to India while it takes at least a month for those coming from Russia. So it is a question of placing orders well in time."

There is also the option of tapping into strategic reserves which hold inventories to meet a week's requirement, he said.

The situation on LNG supplies may turn precarious if the closure lasts long. While near term supplies are secured, a prolonged closure of Strait of Hormuz may leave India with not enough alternatives. This is because unlike crude oil, most LNG volumes are locked in long-term contracts and only limited volumes are available in the spot or current market, another official said.

The government is closely monitoring the evolving situation and working on alternatives, another official said.

4 infra firms bid for Hebbal...

Tunnel, from Page 1

The underground road also includes construction of a railway underbridge and will be built using a cut-and-cover method, meaning no tunnel boring machines will be used. The short tunnel will pass under the down ramp of the Hebbal flyover and the edge of Hebbal lake.

Notably, the short tunnel is coming up on a stretch, especially around the Hebbal flyover, where multiple agencies have proposed different projects in a bid to improve mobility, including an underground metro line, a suburban railway corridor and the 17-km tunnel road.

Sathya Arikutharam, an independent mobility expert, believes the short tunnel will not add any value in addressing congestion.

"Even the justification for this project is hilarious," he remarked. "The government had proposed this project as an immediate relief measure on the grounds that the longer tunnel takes a decade to complete. The same government has conveniently forgotten that it increased the cost of the longer tunnel by Rs 2,300 crore just to complete its construction in 26 months," he said. "Even the Finance Department had questioned the need for a short tunnel."

THE FEDERAL BANK LIMITED
Regd. Office: Aluva, Kerala.

ZONAL OFFICE: 2nd Floor, Halcyon Complex, No.9, St. Marks Road, Bangalore-560 001.
e-mail: bgrr-cpc@federalbank.co.in Phone: 080-22074610/604/613/624/625

BGRR/PvtSale/Q4/2025-26 **NOTICE FOR PRIVATE SALE OF GOLD** **26/02/2026**

Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that Gold Ornaments pledged in the following Gold Loan accounts, with the under mentioned Branches of the Bank, which are overdue for redemption and which have not been regularized so far in spite of repeated notices, will be put for Private sale, in the respective Branches on any date after 10-03-2026 as shown below:

Br. Bangalore/St. Marks Road: No. 9, Halcyon Complex, St. Marks Road, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 001, Ph. No. 080-32994454 :-
11046900054883,11046900054875,11046900054180,11046400014825,11046400014833,11046400014841,11046400014858,11046900053695,11046900055690.
Br. Bangalore/Gandhi Nagar: P B No. 9981, No. 24, 2nd Cross, Gandhi Nagar, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 009, Ph. No. 080-22385208 :-
11895600005805,11895600005920,11895600005938,11895600005649,11895600005722,11895600005847,11895600005862,11895600005821,11895600005888,11895600005813,11895600005896,11895600005904,11895600005631,11895600005656,
Br. Bangalore/Rajaji Nagar : No. 60/60, Raj Chambers, Dr. Rajkumar Road, 2nd Block, Rajaji Nagar, Bangalore-560 010, Ph. No. 080-23522007:-
13346400287902,13346400249902,13346900016017,13346400279305,13346400287555,13346400290641,13346900026354,13346900024177,13346900024185,13346900014913,13346900016215,13346100683350,13346900016934,13346900017064,13346900023948,13346900023955,13346400290013,13346400290021,13346900014459,13346400290716,13346400292498,13346400292514,13346400292431,13346900026743,13346900016371,13346900017270,13346900017288,13346900018351,13346900025703,13346900016462,13346800082671,13346900015407,13346900016835,13346100681933,13346100681941,13346100681958,13346900015373,13346900021157,13346900014400,13346900015332,13346900026453,13346400292183,13346400292738,13346800083992,13346900028004,13346400292167,13346900016140,13346900016165,13346900016173,13346900023609,13346900023617,13346900028426,13346900028434,13346100693011,13346100694407,13346100696436,13346900014038,13346900018070,13346900018088,13346900021280,13346900024854,13346900027998.
Br. Bangalore/R T Nagar : No.20, 1st Main Road, 108 'B' Bus Station, Ganga Nagar, R T Nagar P O, Bangalore- 560 032, Ph. No. 080-23434258 :-
14726400082214,14726100222250,14726900003116,14726400069963,14726900006077,14726400080853,14726900004650,14726900004957,14726900005830,14726900005988,14726400084293,14726800063145,14726900004197,14726100221088,14726900002308,14725600002089,14726500019058,14726900006713,14726400084830,14726400086090,14726800078176,14726900004304,14726900002753,14726400086462,14726900020064,14726900003108,14726400083592,14726400086223,14726400086231,14726100222664,14726100222672,14726400086884,14726900006911,14726100224538,14726900003108,14726400083592,14726400087775,14726400087783,14726400087791,14726900009139.
Br. Bangalore/Indiranagar: 315/1, 100 Feet Road, Indiranagar, Bangalore, Karnataka-560 038 Ph. No. 080-25212341 :-
15355600004833,15356900003053,15356900003079,15356900003095,15356400038229,15356400053194,15356900006676,15356400063961,15355600004742,15356400059456,15355600004817,15355600004890,15356400061098,15356400053053,15355600004718,15356900003608,15356400062427,15356400063367,15356900004242,15356900004739,15356900005199,15356400062534,15356400061510,15356900000893,15356900001545,15356900004556,15356900005470,15355600004346,15356900006262,15356400058813,15356900002592.
Br. Bangalore/Banaswadi: No 13, Banaswadi Main Road, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 043 Ph. No. 080-25420700 :- 14716900015814,14716900016093,14716900009585,14716900017919,14716400039736,14716900007282,14716900012480,14716900015731,14716900015749,14716900007647,14716900014825,14716800086675,14716900008207,14716800112364,14716800112570,14716900008744,14716900009791,14716500005827,14716100315642,14716900002473,14716900005658,14716900008496,14716900009999,14716900009007,14716900016028,14716900015681,14716500006593,14716100315931,14716900003281,14716900009189,14716900012902,14716900018529,14716900022034.
Br.Bangalore/Krishnarajapuram: Vsr Complex, Old Madras Road, Krishnarajapuram, Bangalore Urban, Karnataka- 560 036 Ph No. 080-25619070 :-
15615600001687,15615600001745,15615600001752,15615600001760,15615600001786,15615600001794,15615600001810,15615600001836,15616900007556,15616900007564,15616400024655,15616900001807,15616900007747,15615600001869,15616900001393,15616900001815,15616900005055,15616400030405,15616400030660,15615600001885,15616100194337,15616800036986,15615600001919,15615600001877,15616900005469,15616900008158,15615600001893,15616900008554,15616900001443,15616400028763,15616400030512,15616900003399,15616400029522,15616800035863.
Br. Bangalore/Jalahalli: 17/1, Savithri, S M Road, Jalahalli West, Bangalore, Karnataka-560 015, Ph. No. 080-28372201:-
15826900004244,15825600002920,15826400142403,15826400142411,15825600002904,15826400144912,15826900006843,15826900014987,15826900017931,15826900002768,15826400144706,15826400145646,15825600002912,15826400140985,15825600002938,15825600002953,15826100645283,15825600002433,15826900014532,15826100644161,15826100644575,15826100644609,15826100646034,15826400143252,15826900013427,15826100646273,15826900018418,15826900018749,15826900018756,15826900019077,15826900011587,15826900018053,15826900008468,15826100647503,15826400143864,15826400144003,15826400144482,15826400144607,15826900015687,15826100640623,15826900003998,15826900019671,15826900014714,15826900019325,15826500015236,15826400140936,15826900014763,15826900014771,15826900014789,15826900014490,15826900017964,15826900018079,15826900019341,15826500015541,15825600003001,15826100648519,15826100648527,15826900004756,15826500015228,15826900008039,15826900008047,15826400145869,15826900009029,15826900026411,15826400144060,15826400144078,15826400144086,15826400144342,15826400144540,15826900020554.
Br. Bangalore/Vignana Nagar: No. 124, S R Plaza, Vignana Nagara, Main Road, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 037 Ph. No. 080-25348901 :-
16296900003811,16296900005543,16296900005253,16296400076135,16296900005154,16296900005162,16296900010618,16296900004934,16296400068660,16296400074924,16296900003480,16296900008067,16296900004769,16296900005113,16296400075889,16296900005147,16296400075947,16296900012077,16296400078149,16296400078420.
Br. Tumkur: Amogh Mansion, KR Extension, Tumkur-572101 Ph:0816-2255470 :-
16036900000908,16036900001112,16036900001153,16036900001344,16036400107096,16036900001054,16036100137070,16036400106296,16036400107435,16036400111296,16036400111304,16036900004066,16036400107898,16036400110025,16036900003464,16036400106825,16036400107112,16036400111882,16036400112021,16036400103335,16036400110199,16036400110355,16036900002276,16036900003761,16036100137385,16036400112260,16036900003068.
Br. Bangalore/Vijayanagar: Ground Floor of TRS Arcade, #3, 1st main road, Income Tax Layout, Opposite to AM Hospital, Vijayanagar, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 040 Ph. No. 080-23159121 :- 16436400119846,16436400100929,16436400121966,16436400129225,16436400118707,16436100363173,16436400122915,16436900002336,16436900004837,16436900002237,16436900000454,16436900002278,16436100366077,16436400120141,16436900000694,16436900001007,16436400125371,16436900002104,16436400128078,16436400118905,16436900005792,16436500013295,16436400129068,16436500011000,16436500013949,16436400128151,16436400128177,16436400128805,16436400124622,16436900001734,16436400124218,16436400124499,16436900001940,16436500010994,16436500011059,16436400128136,16436400125587,16436900004803,16435600001887,16436900005941,16436100366846,16436900001619,16436900007541,16436900007558,16436900007566,16436900007624,16436900007632,16436900008952,16436400124812,16436900001767.
Br. Bangalore/Sadashivanagar: #88, Keerthi, 2nd Main, Palace Guttahalli P O, Bangalore,Karnataka-560 003 Ph. No. 080 23565050 :-
21986400069410,21985600001223,21986400069030,21986400069048,21986400069162,21986900003315.
Br. Bangalore / Thanisandra : GF, No.89/1, Thanisandra, K Narayanapura Road, Dr.S R K Nagar PO, Bangalore- 560 077 :-
23886400011214,23886900001509,23886400011248,23886300002040,23886400003880,23886400006479,23886400003559,23886400005851,23886900001616,23886400009556,23886400009564,23886900000709,23886400007642,23886400011271,23885600000514,23885600000571.
Br. Bangalore / Vidyaranyapura : Ground Floor, No. 1123, Khata No. 1066/2744/1123, 6th Block, HMT Layout, Vidyaranyapura, Bangalore - 560097 Ph. :- 9544597221 :- 23966900002580,23966100000731,23966400005570,23966900000998,23966900001434,23966900001608,23966900001194,23966400005752,23966900000881,23966900002325,23966900003844.
Br. Bangalore / Basaveshwaranagar : #33, 1st main road, 3rd Stage, 4th block, West of Chord Road, Basaveshwaranagar, Bangalore- 560 079 :- 24666400015251,24666900003146,24665600000626,24665600000303,24665600000337,24666900002684,24666400012712,24666400014007,24666900000175,24666900004516,24666400015434,24666400013686,24665600000642,24666900000290,24666400011045,24665600000253,24666900003922,24666400016911,24666400009601,24666400013868,24666400015905,24666400016358,24666900001371,24666900001587,24666400012175,24666900001421,24666900003153,24666900001652,24665600000519,24666400014445,24666400014502,24666400014510.
Br. Hebbal / Kempapura: Elevated ground floor, 319/37/4, Dasarahalli Main Road, Bhuvaneshwari Nagar, Hebbala - Kempapura, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 024 :- 24926900000702,24926400002026,24926400002042,24926400003396,24925600000228,24926400003131,24925600000160,24926400003149,24926400003156,24926400003560,24926400003602,24925600000111,24926400003016.
Br. Bangalore/Peenya Industrial Area: Plot No. 166, 3rd Main, 4th Cross, Peenya Industrial Area, Laggare Main Road, Bangalore, Karnataka-560 058 :- 26116400000133, **Br. Bangalore/Rama Murthy Nagar: Ground Floor, V Tower, T C Palya Main Road, Rama Murthy Nagar, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560 016 :-** 26146100000182. **Br. Chikkaballapur: No. 1153/3, BB Road, Chikkaballapur, Karnataka- 562 101 Ph. No. 08156-274088 :-** 20216400060198,20216400065007,20216400059570.
Br. Bangalore/Chikkajala: Sri Byraveshwara Complex, No 82/3, Chikkajala Village, Chikkajala Post, KIAL Road, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore, Karnataka- 562 157 :- 20866900001777,20866900001637,20866400058632,20866400061438,20866900004326,20866900002379,20866900003922,20866900002064,20866900001942,20866400058392,20866100060326,20866400060463,20866900003799,
Br. Doddaballapur: D Cross Road, Doddaballapur, Bangalore Rural, Karnataka- 561 203 Ph. No. 080-27622105 :-
16316400104933,16316400117703,16316400126324,16316400123990,16316400131340.
Br. Devanahalli: 135/9, Next To Corporation Bank, D B Cross, Devanahalli , Bangalore Rural, Karnataka- 562 110, Ph. No. 080 27683906 :- 15296400208531,15296400201908,15296400203540,15296400205289,15296400149420,15296900001543,15296400201387,15296400141427,15296400205446,15296100246088,15296400189459,15296900002863,15296900002475,15296900002251,15296400205750,15296400217391,15296400219660,15296400203797,15296900002343,15296900001618,15296400201528,15296400205958,15296400205800,15296900003143,15296400211469,15296400220908,15296400220924,15296400209232,15296400224108.
Br. Dommasandra: Khata No. 13 - Gramathana, Dommasandra, Bidarahalli Hobli, Virgonagar P O, Bangalore- 560 049 :-
21656400031278,21656900001680,21656900005186,21656400016113,21656400016121,21656400021352,21656900001813,21656900000864,21656100049364,21656100047582,21656100048853,21656900001698,21656900001920,21656900003579,21656400031534,21656900001904,21656900003413.
Br. Hirandahalli: Sy. No.81/1, Hirandahalli Main Road, Opp. Aswathakatte, Virgonagar P O, Bangalore- 560 049 Ph No:8867121675 :-
21636400109761,21636900002482,21636900003233,21636400112922,21636400112955,21636400113961,21636900001070,21636900001351,21636900001369,21636900003639,21636900003654,21636900004108,21636900004181,21636400108425,21636400109407,21636400108292,21636900004538,21636400109357,21636900001419,21636100020367,21636400108581,21636400115479,21636100021621,21636100021779,21636900003522,21636900003837,21636900005345,21636400108359,21636400109027,21636400115578,21636400116089.
Br.Hoskote: Gangamma Gudi Road, M V Extension, Hoskote, Bangalore Rural, Karnataka, 562 114 Ph. No. 080-27933430 :-
15856400052419,15856400054225,15856400033716,15856400035448,15856400052732,15856400038012,15856400048441,15856100093812,15856100099744,15856400033146,15856400050892,15856400055370,15856400054498,15855500001466,15856400056865.
Br. Jangamakote Cross: No. 295, Hosapet Village, Jangamakote Cross, Shidlaghtta (Tq), Chikballapur, Karnataka-562 102 Ph. No. 08158252222 :-
21696400060489,21696400034666,21696100037019,21696100037290,21696400054383,21696400061040,21696400066676,21696100035443,21696400055018,21696400053807,21696400049458,21696400058699,21696400055687,21696900000266,21696400053724,21696400055299,21696900000357,21696400053732,21696400059614,21696400063426,21696400036638,21696400051892,21696400055398,21696400055604,21696400056164,21696400056032,21696400054904,21696400049987,21696400053138.
Br. Tiptur: 156 & 157 , Opp Janata Deluxe lodge, Vinayaka Nagara, Off B H Road, Tiptur, TumkurDist.- 572 201:- 19906400041395,19906400031263,19906400040074,19906400042971.
Br. Nelamangala: Paramanna Layout, B H Road, Nelamangala, Bangalore Rural,- 562 123 Ph. 080-27722251 :- 15536400142226,15536400146367,15536400139867,15536400137267,15536400140923,15536400136178,15536400143802,15536400144453,15536400138109,15536400138372,15536400145088,15536400146284,15536400146292,15536400145310,15536400139750,15536400143059,15536400146201,15536400144255,15536400143794,15536400146235.
Br. Bangalore/Tarabanahalli: #22,Tarabanahalli, Hesaraghatta Main Road, Chikkabanavara Post, Bangalore- 560 090 :- 26555600000015.
Br. Kunigal: KRS Agrahara, BM Road, Kunigal, Tumkur- 572 130 Ph. No. 08132221111 :- 20706400126106,20706100010477,20706400125066,20706400137897,20705600000301,20706400072391,20706400070759,20706400143507,20706400143689,20706100018496,20706400146914,20706100013794,20706400131742,20706400134795,20706400135768,20706400135776,20706400135784,20706400138143,20706400146922.

Bangalore 26-02-2026 **Vice President & Zonal Head**

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

Imperialist terror unleashed on Iran

The joint United States-Israel offensive against Iran, eight months after the 2025 attack, signals a militarist-imperialist brazenness to meet 'objectives' that are made up. The attack involved the targeted assassination of Iran's political, religious and military leadership and their families. A world, particularly the West, inured to the prolonged genocidal killings in Gaza, is unlikely to be stirred by the latest US-Israel military action or the dangers posed to nation-states by rogue-like US and Israel flouting international law. The playbook is the same as in the past: diplomatic dialogue is initiated, this time with Oman as the mediator, and the cover of talks is used to destroy the other party. What makes it particularly reprehensible this time is that Oman's mediation was close to bearing fruit with Iran conceding far more than it has ever done in talks with the US. Therefore, the "pre-emptive" attack was obviously to pre-empt the US-Oman-Iran dialogue from closing a deal.

This rush to attack Iran has been laid bare by Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi, who was the mediator. He revealed what the negotiations had achieved to thwart an Israeli military offensive similar to the last one. Now, the perception has gained ground that Israel wanted to pre-empt any US-Iran reconciliation that would endanger the Zionist's militarist march towards the dream of Greater Israel. The war has triggered Iranian hostility against Arab states and pushed the region into deeper instability. President Trump's claims of Iran being an "imminent" threat to the US is a familiar script, drawing on a mix of disparate themes—plans for nuclear weapons (no credible evidence) and "freedom" for the people through regime change. The aggressors chose their moment carefully, as Iran is still under severe economic strain and was reeling under civilian unrest.

US and Israel flout international law to launch an unwarranted and deadly military offensive

While the West's Arab allies may be vocal in their hostility to Iran, they are unlikely to be beneficiaries. Military action has rarely brought about a smooth regime change. Iran has no choice but to fight back lest it be reduced to another Gaza and its people consigned to the fate of Palestinians. How the surviving political leadership of Iran and the Revolutionary Guards respond to the challenges they face now will indicate what is in store for the region. There have been excesses in Iran under Ayatollah Khamenei, but none of that can justify the US-Israel war and assassinations. The situation in Iraq, Libya, Syria, Gaza, Lebanon and elsewhere, where US forces have interfered and occupied in the past, offers one lesson: self-appointed foreign saviours with their own scores to settle can rarely ensure a transition from a problematic regime to a stable, peaceful and democratic one.

Act decisively on Chickpet fire safety

The massive fire that gutted over 30 shops in a three-storey commercial complex in Chickpet on February 25 was a near-miss that Bengaluru cannot afford to dismiss lightly. The blaze, which broke out around 6.30 am in Kumbarpet off Avenue Road, raged for more than eight hours, destroying businesses dealing in fancy goods, perfumes, toys, printing material and hardware. That no lives were lost owed more to timing than to preparedness; most shops were shut, and workers who use the upper floors as makeshift overnight dormitories were evacuated before the fire intensified. The incident exposes familiar but unresolved red flags in the Pete area. Most alarming was the nearly two-hour delay in alerting the fire department, with shopkeepers reportedly attempting to douse the flames themselves. This allowed a containable fire to escalate into a major blaze. Equally troubling is the routine misuse of retail buildings as godowns, stocked with highly flammable plastic goods, perfumes and chemicals. An electrical short circuit is suspected, once again drawing attention to ageing wiring struggling to cope with modern commercial loads.

Chickpet's physical form magnifies these risks. Buildings stand wall-to-wall, leaving no setbacks to arrest the spread of fire. Staircases are narrow and frequently blocked by stored goods, while ventilation is almost non-existent. The narrow, inaccessible lanes and lack of a dedicated underground hydrant network forced fire tenders to park 500 metres away, relaying water through long hose pipes. That a complex housing 125 shops could function without robust fire-safety oversight reflects long-standing regulatory gaps in dense commercial districts.

Last week's blaze exposes an appalling lack of preparedness

Redevelopment is often projected as the obvious solution. In theory, a comprehensive rebuild could widen access roads, segregate storage, and introduce modern fire infrastructure. In practice, however, this may not suit Chickpet. As part of the original Pete established by Kempegowda in the 16th century, it carries immense historical and cultural weight. Besides, fragmented ownership and the scale of daily commerce make wholesale demolition legally contentious and economically disruptive. This reality makes immediate, enforceable reforms unavoidable. The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) must prioritise electrical audits, underground cabling, lane-level fire hydrants, and permanent stationing of mini fire tenders within the market. Storage of hazardous material must be strictly regulated, escape routes kept clear, and trader associations trained as first responders. Early-warning systems, such as wireless smoke alarms, can provide critical minutes in areas with limited access. The Chickpet fire is not an isolated mishap but a reminder of accumulated neglect. Acting on it decisively can prevent a far deadlier incident and safeguard a commercial district that remains vital to Bengaluru's economy and heritage.

SENIOR POWER

Unexplored potential of work after retirement

Our institutions should reflect the changes in life expectancy, enabling retirees who wish to contribute professionally to do so

VIBHAV MARIWALA

I recently attended a roundtable on the potential opportunities of cryopreservation, i.e. preserving the human body at low temperatures in the hope of future revival.

While the conversation was riveting and sparked lots of debate, scientifically and ethically, I was struck by the question not being discussed: What kind of society do we need to make a longer life worth living?

This question is the central blind spot of the longevity movement. Its proponents are focused almost entirely on the biology of ageing, which are in and of themselves not trivial. But they rest on an assumption so large it goes almost unexamined: that if we extend the quantity of human life, the quality of social life will somehow follow; it may not.

With geopolitical, climate, and technological changes, and the institutional strain, society may not be able to navigate a much older society.

Human institutions, work, retirement, education, marriage, and the welfare state were largely designed in an era when life expectancy in advanced economies hovered around 65 to 70 years.

The modern pension system was conceived when workers were expected to draw from it for a decade at most. The standard arc of a career, study, work, retire was premised on a roughly linear, time-limited life.

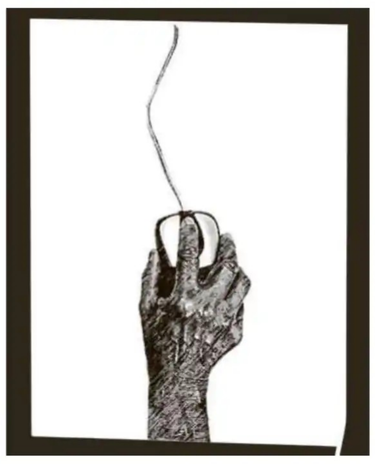
Even the structure of higher education, compressing learning into the early twenties, reflects a model of human development calibrated to a shorter existence.

We are already living beyond those designs. In most OECD countries, life expectancy now exceeds 80 years. And by 2050, there will be 52 people aged 65 or over for every 100 working-age adults in the OECD. Nonetheless, our institutions have barely moved, and retirees feel it today.

A survey of over 1,000 experienced professionals and retirees aged 50 to 80 across India, conducted by WisdomCircle in partnership with Dalberg, reveals the scale of the mismatch.

Approximately 70% of respondents are either currently working or actively exploring opportunities post-retirement. Nearly half identified professional engagement as the activity they most look forward to ahead of travel, education, volunteering, and spirituality.

Moreover, 62% reported feeling fully prepared to adapt to new roles. The aspiration, the energy, and the capability



are present. The institutions to absorb them are not.

A problem of supply, not demand

The gap is not one of motivation. It is one of design. On WisdomCircle's platform, there is currently one available opportunity for every 40 professionals seeking one. That is not a typical market failure; it is a sign that the economy has not reoriented itself to deploy the productive capacity of its elderly.

An interesting insight the survey revealed is that organisations do not provide much support for one's transition to retirement. And while one could debate whether a firm should provide such support to former employees, it reveals a lack of incentive to support this cohort of workers.

In fact, only 2% of respondents experienced any form of gradual transition programme. As one respondent put it: "They could have given me opportunities to mentor younger employees. My decades of experience just walked out the door with me."

This is not a peripheral concern. An HBR study cited in related research estimates that within a single organisation, approximately 700 retirements result in the loss of around 27,000 years of collective experience, spanning client relationships, institutional memory, and the kind of pattern recognition that no onboarding programme can replicate. When multiplied across an economy, the scale of this knowledge haemorrhage becomes difficult to fully account for.

Perhaps the most important single finding in the survey data is a pattern that emerges with age. After the standard retirement age, i.e. 60 years, the proportion of older adults in formal employment declines sharply. But the desire to explore opportunities does not. It persists, and in some age cohorts, it rises. Among respondents aged 75 and above, two-thirds describe themselves as actively exploring opportunities while none are in full-time work.

The gap between access and aspiration is a consequence of how our institutions are calibrated to a retirement age tied to a shorter life expectancy. The retirement cliff was designed for a world that no longer exists. Longevity aims to extend this further, without rewiring society as a whole.

Although many reforms, from pension plans to the nature of employment matter, the bigger question is around purpose and meaning. Work, in this context, is not merely an economic variable.

Participant interviews reveal that the primary reasons for older professionals seeking work are purpose and identity driven, and centred around connection, not financial gains.

Japan, facing the most acute ageing challenge of any large economy, has moved to keep older citizens embedded in community and social functions as a matter of explicit policy.

Singapore's SkillsFuture programme reframes education as a lifelong process rather than a front-loaded credential. These are important efforts, but they remain at the margins of a much larger institutional inertia that has yet to be seriously confronted.

Millions of people want to contribute, feel prepared to do so, and are finding that the institutions meant to facilitate that contribution simply do not exist.

The science of living longer is advancing rapidly. The architecture of living differently has barely begun.

(The writer is a senior policy advisor at WisdomCircle, an AgeTech platform connecting experienced professionals with organisations globally. The WisdomCircle–Dalberg survey covered 1,067 respondents aged 50–80 across India)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

The pink before the gold shower

Bengaluru's trees herald summer—blushing then blazing

JAYANTHI CHANDRASEKARAN

'If winter comes, can spring be far behind?' wrote Percy Bysshe Shelley, invoking hope in the cycle of seasons. In Northern India spring lingers gently after winter, offering a tender interlude before summer sets in. But in Bengaluru, the season is announced not by a thermometer but by a breathtaking aerial ballet. Long before the mercury peaks, the city's canopy undergoes a dramatic transformation, shedding its leaves for a riotous, neon-bright palette. This is the "Garden City" at its most authentic—a curated masterpiece of botanical engineering where the heralds of summer are the trees themselves.

This seasonal spectacle is more than just a visual treat; it is a living link to Bengaluru's history. The "serial blooming" landscape we see today was meticulously planned by the Wadiyar dynasty and their German and British botanists. They sought to blend the exotic with the native, creating a city that didn't just have gardens but was a garden.

Among these seasonal marvels, one tree in particular commands attention: the Tabebuia rosea, often called the rose trumpet tree. In February-March, cloaked entirely in delicate, paper-thin pink blossoms, it stands without a single leaf in sight, as though draped in a bridal veil. Though tall and stately, there is a certain demureness in its presence—a quiet elegance that softens the severity of the season. Walking down an avenue like Cubbon Park or the lanes of Jayanagar during this time feels like stepping into a watercolour painting.

Closely following the pink wave is the Jacaranda mimosifolia. With its fern-like foliage and bell-shaped, mauve flowers, the Jacaranda adds a cool, regal purple to the city's palette. Originally introduced from South America by visionary horticulturists like Gustav Krumbiegel, these trees were part of a "serial blooming" plan. The goal was simple yet poetic: to ensure that as one species faded, another would take its place, keeping the city in a perpetual state of floral celebration.

As April matures and the heat sharpens, the Cassia fistula, or the Indian Laburnum, takes centre stage. Known locally as *Kakke Mara*, its pendulous clusters of bright yellow flowers earn it the nickname "Golden Shower". Unlike the delicate Tabebuias, the Cassia's yellow is defiant and electric, its golden inflorescences hanging like ornate chandeliers that sway in the summer breeze.

Then comes the undisputed queen of the Indian summer: the Gulmohar. If the Tabebuias are a soft whisper, the Gulmohar is a joyful shout. Its wide, umbrella-like canopy turns a searing shade of scarlet and orange, mirroring the intensity of the sun it thrives under. By May, these trees, which line the city's highways, old cantonment roads and the Indian Institute of Science campus, join this annual pageant.

For the modern Bengalurian, these blooms are a cultural marker. They signify the arrival of the Ugadi festival, the taste of the first summer mangoes, and a brief, beautiful window where the city's infamous traffic is forgiven because the view from the windscreen is framed in gold and crimson.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

India must take the lead in ending the war

The escalating conflict between Israel, the US, and Iran raises a pressing question: can the world afford this war? With airspace closed and trade disrupted, the impact is felt globally. As a 'middle nation', India should leverage its relationships to broker peace. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's connections with world leaders offer an opportunity to mediate. Regime change has failed in the past; it is time for diplomacy. India is among what is termed as the 'middle nations'. It needs to accept this responsibility and talk and discuss with friends and allies to end this war. The US president has said several times that PM Modi is a good friend, and Prime Minister Modi has also stated multiple times about how close he is to his friend Donald Trump. PM Modi should use his good offices, and speak to the US to end this war.
Hemachandra Basappa, Bengaluru

Restraint is key

The reported assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is a catastrophic breach of international norms. Extrajudicial killings undermine global stability and invite anarchy. Responsible nations must condemn this act and demand a return to diplomacy. The cycle of violence must end. The targeted killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei by the US and Israeli forces represents a reckless departure from civilised diplomacy that invites global anarchy. Regardless of one's geopolitical stance, the extrajudicial assassination of a sovereign head of State is a dangerous precedent that replaces established legal frameworks with raw military force.
Vijaykumar H K, Raichur

Conscience over comfort

Apropos 'The Epstein effect: Why smart people protect dangerous men' (Mar 1), the Epstein case reveals an uncomfortable truth: comfort often trumps morality. Influential people protect the powerful, normalising cruelty and silencing accountability. It is a failure of courage, not awareness. We must value conscience above comfort.
Aditya Kamble, Kalaburagi

Abuse of power

The special court's criticism of the CBI in the liquor policy case exposes a disturbing trend of using agencies to target opposition leaders. The court's remarks highlight the need for accountability and transparency in investigations. The CBI must be insulated from political interference.
V Padmanabhan, Bengaluru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

It is time to end family rule in Tamil Nadu.

Edappadi K Palaniswami, AIADMK chief

Everybody is against nepotism until it is their turn.

Shon Mehta

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

When creativity wounds harmony

The Kerala Story 2 revives discredited 'love jihad' claims, risking deeper communal divides

JOHN BRITTAS

Films may provoke, satirise, criticise, or even offend — that is part of our fundamental freedom. But when the primary intention is to tarnish, dehumanise, or systematically degrade a section of society, it becomes targeted contempt masquerading as creativity.

The Kerala Story 2: Goes Beyond, like its prequel, weaponises imagination against the Muslim community in particular, and Kerala in general — a state long seen as a model of communal harmony. When the makers met the media in Delhi, they admitted the film is not just about Kerala, but incidents across the country. If so, why drag an entire state into the narrative for targeted vilification? The Kerala High Court, taking cognisance, made scathing remarks against the filmmakers for showing the state 'in a wrong light'.

Propaganda films are not new to Indian cinema, but when blatant lies are peddled as facts under the guise of 'inspired by true events', they take on a dangerous edge. *The Kerala Story* (released in 2023, timed ahead of the Lok Sabha polls) claimed to expose a massive 'love *jihad*' conspiracy, alleging thousands of Hindu and Christian women from Kerala were tricked into converting to Islam and recruited by ISIS. Marketed aggressively — with Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself mentioning it at a rally in Karnataka—the film initially touted the figure of 32,000 women (later revised amid backlash). Yet, fact-checkers, investigations, and official probes found no evidence. A handful of isolated cases were exaggerated into a sweeping, unfounded narrative. Needless to say, the Union government is yet to acknowledge this phantom called 'Love Jihad'.

Every credible analysis found it to be Islamophobic propaganda that stigmatised Muslims as predators, portrayed interfaith relationships as threats, and falsely painted Keralam—a state renowned for its high literacy, social progress, and centuries-old communal harmony—as a hotbed of religious extremism and conversion rackets. The sequel is on the same track, with the trailer showing a hapless woman being force-fed beef.

As someone who frequently travels outside Keralam, I can vouch that the damage from the first film was profound. Even educated people asked me about the 'worsening situation in Keralam'. It deepened divisions, fuelled suspicion between communities, amplified stereotypes that turned everyday interactions into perceived dangers, and contributed to a broader climate of Islamophobia.

Reports highlighted how it exacerbated religious tensions, influenced public opinion to view Muslims with suspicion, and even sparked harassment linked to heightened polarisation. In Keralam itself, where interfaith coexistence has long been a strength, the film was seen as a deliberate attempt to erode that fabric, sow seeds of hatred, and damage the state's secular image for political gain.

Justice Ujjal Bhuyan recently illustrated how divisive narratives worsen prejudice. He recounted how his daughter's Muslim friend, a PhD scholar, was denied rental accommodation in Delhi after her surname revealed her religious identity. The landlady bluntly refused, telling her to look elsewhere. This incident, he noted, shows the gap between constitutional ideals of equality and fraternity and a ground reality of exclusion—where propaganda fuels everyday discrimination.

Such content doesn't just entertain — it actively shapes perceptions, turning nuanced realities into victim-villain binaries along religious lines. In India's diverse society, these portrayals risk eroding trust, fostering community suspicion, stereotyping minorities, and transforming personal freedoms into communal flashpoints — often for commercial or political gain, amplified by social media.

The Supreme Court recently slammed the title of an OTT film, *Ghooskhor Pandat* (starring Manoj Bajpayee, directed by Neeraj Pandey), terming it contrary to 'public order, morality, and constitutional fraternity amid fragile societal sensibilities.' If this is the response to a colloquial title, what observations might this objectionable movie sequel deserve from the apex court? In a separate opinion, Justice Bhuyan underscored that it is constitutionally impermissible to vilify any community through any medium.

Today's polarising politics is paving the way for a plethora of propaganda films, as promoters know viewers can be influenced. This trend has amplified and professionalised, as seen in the much-hyped *Dhurandhar*, a spy thriller starring Ranveer Singh. Like most so-called ultranationalist movies, it blends historical events with fiction to portray perpetual cross-border threats, drawing criticism for distortions, manufactured Pakistani villainy, and hyper-patriotic binaries, often labelled as ideologically embedded films.

As *The Kerala Story 2* was released on February 27, following clearance from a division bench of the Kerala High Court and echoes of the 2023 film's harm persist, the challenge is clear: prioritise responsible storytelling over sensationalism that profits from fear, hatred, and polarisation. Kerala's discerning public has often rejected such narratives; the hope is that this critical lens prevails nationwide before more noxious and fetid content widens societal fractures further.

(The writer is a Member of Parliament)

Tackling abuse: When will we report what we know?

MIRIAM CHINNAPPA

I was having a coffee catch-up with a friend in Bengaluru recently, the kind of conversation that begins casually and ends somewhere much heavier. We found ourselves talking about the Epstein files, the renewed attention they have drawn, and about Gisèle Pelicot in France, a survivor of sexual violence who chose to speak publicly about what was done to her. She refused anonymity, saying that shame belongs to the perpetrator, not the victim.

We wondered whether this was finally the moment of reckoning survivors across the world have waited for or just another cycle of outrage that would flare briefly, trend loudly, and then fade.

My friend then said something that shifted the conversation entirely. She told me she had finally opened up about how her uncle had repeatedly assaulted her when she was a child. It was known in the family. It had always been known. And it had always been managed. Yet, even now, years later, people were still sitting on the fence. Advising restraint. Suggesting silence. Saying it was complicated.

That, in many ways, is the heart of the problem in India: not the absence of law, but the presence of a culture that protects perpetrators and isolates victims.

India has strong laws to address child sexual abuse. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, or POCSO, recognises that abuse most often happens within trusted spaces and allows survivors to come forward even years later, as adults. There is no limitation period. The Juvenile Justice Act establishes Child Welfare Committees in every district to receive complaints and act in the best interests of the child. Special courts exist to hear these cases, and child helplines such as 1098 are meant to provide immediate support.

On paper, the framework is robust. In practice, reporting remains low, trials drag on, and justice arrives late, if at all. National Crime Records Bureau data shows that thousands of cases of child sexual abuse are reported every year, with tens of thousands remaining pending in courts, trapped in procedural delay. In 2022 alone, more than 64,000 cases of sexual offences against children were reported, including over 38,000 cases of rape of minors under the POCSO Act.

And yet these disturbing numbers are not the full picture. They are only the visible surface. Most survivors never report abuse at all. Fear, shame, family pressure, social stigma, and mistrust of institutions ensure that what reaches police records is only a fraction of what actually occurs.

Those who do report are most often children harmed by people they know. These are not strangers. They are uncles, teachers, neighbours, religious figures, coaches, and community leaders – people with familiarity, authority, and access.

What fails is not legislation. What fails is the social and cultural resolve to hold perpetrators accountable.

The renewed attention on Jeffrey Epstein exposes this failure on a global scale. Despite years of allegations, numerous survivors, and well-documented links to power, accountability has been limited. Files are released. Names circulate. Arrests remain few.

This is not coincidence. Research in criminology and child protection has long shown that sexual predators rely on credibility, respectability, and social acceptance to operate. They cultivate trust deliberately, building outwardly respectable lives that are not incidental but strategic, becoming shields that allow abuse to continue unchecked.

Access, too, is deliberate. Studies show that sexual predators actively seek environments where children are available and oversight is weak. In India, this reality is compounded by poverty, inequality, overcrowding and chronic institutional neglect. Millions of children are marginalised, unattended, under-supervised, or dependent on adults outside their families for care, education, food, or opportunity. This makes them highly accessible and deeply vulnerable.

Education, religion, sport, charity work, and social service repeatedly emerge as spaces of abuse due to the combination of trust, authority, and access they involve. In India, this pattern is painfully familiar: the benevolent uncle, the revered religious figure, the committed teacher, and the so-called social reformer working with marginalised children are all granted unquestioned access in the name of care or change.

When abuse is named, another pattern follows swiftly. Victims are discredited. Their motives are questioned. Property disputes are invented. Jealousy is implied. Families are urged to stay quiet. Communities rally around the accused. Survivors are pressured and intimidated into silence.

Patriarchy makes this easier, and it is upheld not only by men but also often by women acting in defence of family honour and social stability. Speaking out about abuse is deliberately distorted into disruption instead of being recognised as the naming of harm.

When my friend and I finished our coffee, the Epstein files were still on our phones, and Pelicot's words lingered between us. The distance between a global scandal and an Indian family living room suddenly felt very small.

We already know what abuse looks like and how it hides. The question is no longer whether we know. Until reporting abuse is seen not as disruption but as duty, and until silence is recognised as complicity rather than restraint, justice and healing will remain something promised but not delivered.

(The writer is the executive director of the Centre for Law and Transformative Change)

Pakistan's airstrikes in Afghanistan showed its overwhelming superiority in conventional warfare, but the Taliban have refined a lethal repertoire of guerrilla tactics

Relatives and mourners stand near the coffin of a victim killed during Pakistani airstrikes in Ghani Khel district, Nangarhar province, Afghanistan, on March 1. Afghan and Pakistani troops battled along their border with the fighting coming alongside multiple strikes including the former US air base at Bagram. AFP

No clear endgame in the Afghanistan-Pakistan conflict

ELIAN PELTIER

Once again, Afghanistan is fighting a mightier enemy. After Pakistan declared "open war" on the Taliban government on Friday, two armed forces with wide gaps in weaponry and tactics between them now face each other along a roughly 1,600-mile-long border.

Pakistan has one of the largest militaries in Asia. The Taliban in Afghanistan have honed guerrilla tactics over more than two decades of war with US forces, which abandoned billions of dollars worth of weapons in 2021.

The latest phase of the conflict, which started with border skirmishes last year, is expected to continue flaring up and may escalate. Additional airstrikes threaten to inflict major damage on cities in Afghanistan, which is already reeling from extreme poverty and a humanitarian crisis. Militant groups supporting the Taliban are likely to target deeper in Pakistan's territory with more attacks, including suicide bombings and assaults on security forces, analysts say.

The Pakistani military carried out a barrage of airstrikes on Afghan military infrastructure on Friday, after accusing the Taliban government of hosting and supporting a militant group that has repeatedly attacked Pakistan's security forces.

"Pakistan wants to take the war to Afghanistan and no longer in Pakistan," said Qamar Cheema, the executive director of the Sanober Institute, a research organisation based in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital.

The strikes this past week did not target major infrastructure to leave room for escalation, Cheema noted. "The Pakistani military knows where to hit and hurt the Taliban the most," he said.

Pakistan's military and security apparatus supported the Taliban for decades, including by providing a refuge for the group's leadership during the US-led war in Afghanistan and supplying the insurgency with weapons.

Its government initially welcomed the Taliban's return to power in 2021, but the relationship soured shortly after Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, an Islamic militant group that opposes the Pakistani state, intensified its attacks across the border. Pakistan accuses the Taliban government of harbouring the group, which is also known as the Pakistani Taliban.

On Friday, the relationship between the two countries reached its lowest point in years.

"Now it is open war between us and you," Pakistan's defence minister, Khawaja Asif, said in a post on social media. The comment was a sharp turn from the public support he had once displayed towards Taliban officials.

The Afghan Ministry of Defence says it has 205,000 men in its armed forces. An additional 223,000 men are in the Afghan police, according to the Interior Ministry, though analysts say those figures are difficult to verify.

The Taliban have also inherited Black Hawk helicopters, Humvee vehicles and thousands of weapons from the war against the United States — worth more than $7 billion in total, according to the Defence Department. Afghan soldiers in the capital, Kabul, and across the country can regularly be seen with M16 and AR-15 rifles, and markets there sell US military uniforms and spare parts for night vision goggles.

Many of those weapons have ended up in the hands of insurgent groups like the Pakistani Taliban.

"The Taliban have definitely capitalised on the stocks of US weapons, but they don't have the logistical and maintenance capacity," said Paddy Ginn, a senior expert on Afghanistan at the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime.

The Afghan military would struggle to hit major Pakistani military bases, Ginn added.

"Afghanistan has a fledgling air force made of helicopters and drones they've weaponised," he said. "Pakistan is pretty impressive in its air defence counter-drones and airstrike capabilities."

Still, the Taliban fighters who now make up the bulk of the Afghan military have repeatedly broken through Pakistani territory through lethal ground incursions. They struck more than 50 locations Friday in coordinated attacks, which the Afghan government said were in retaliation for Pakistani strikes earlier in the week.

"The Taliban mastered the art of taking out isolated military checkpoints when they were fighting internationally backed Afghan troops," said Ibraheem Bahiss, an Afghanistan analyst with the International Crisis Group.

"They're trying to rely on their tried and tested methods because they don't have a lot of other options," he added.

Afghan officials have called for dialogue, and analysts on both sides of the border say the region cannot sustain more volatility.

"It's tit for tat, and it has to end," said Abdul Hai Qanit, an expert on international relations who is based in Kabul. "It's in no one's interest to have more instability in the region, especially with the conflict now unfolding in Iran."

Pakistan has refused the call for talks. Although the Taliban publicly deny hosting the Pakistani Taliban, Islamabad says it has run out of patience with the Taliban leadership after several rounds of failed peace negotiations and relentless attacks.

The Pakistani Taliban have killed more than 1,300 people in over 800 attacks since 2021, according to the Pak Institute for Peace Studies, a research centre based in Islamabad.

Pakistani aircraft hit military compounds in Kabul and Kandahar — home to Afghanistan's supreme leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada — on Friday as well as various other military facilities and arms depots near the Pakistani border in eastern Afghanistan.

The Pakistani military claims to have destroyed 135 Afghan tanks and carrier vehicles and killed more than 330 Afghan fighters in a single day, although it made no distinction between Afghan soldiers and Pakistani Taliban militants.

Pakistan also struck areas that were full of civilians, according to humanitarian organisations and Afghan officials. They added that it targeted at least two camps hosting Afghans who were recently expelled from Pakistan. Returnees evacuated one of the camps; three Afghan civilians were killed and seven others wounded in a strike near the other camp in southeastern Afghanistan on Saturday, Afghan officials said.

The camps are run by United Nations agencies and international and Afghan organisations.

Allison Hooker, the US undersecretary of state for political affairs, said Friday that she had called Pakistan's foreign minister and "expressed support for Pakistan's right to defend itself against Taliban attacks."

After Pakistan's airstrikes in Afghanistan, the Pakistani Taliban and two other Islamic militant groups urged their fighters to intensify attacks in Pakistan's two most populous provinces, Punjab and Sindh, which have largely been spared the brunt of Pakistani Taliban's assaults.

The attacks would aim to "weaken the enemy" and show solidarity with Afghans, the groups said in statements. The Pakistani Taliban have about 6,000 fighters, according to the United Nations.

The Pakistani government has tightened security nationwide, and the US Embassy in Islamabad has advised Americans in Pakistan to avoid large commercial areas.

"A blowback will come," said Mansoor Ahmad Khan, a former Pakistani ambassador to Afghanistan. "That is the nature of war."

Pakistan should leave the door open for de-escalation, he added.

"The Afghan Taliban have suffered heavy damage as a result of Pakistani strikes, no doubt," Khan said. "But an expansion of the war is not in Pakistan's interest. Nor is it in Afghanistan's."

The New York Times

Ballot vs belief

C S DWARAKANATH

With the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) polls approaching, the debate over whether the anti-conversion law should be repealed, retained or just amended has resurfaced with renewed urgency.

On February 3, the Supreme Court of India took up a petition filed by the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), challenging the legality of anti-conversion laws and seeking a stay on them. The court issued notice to the Union government and 12 states. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi is hearing the matter and has directed the respondents to reply within four weeks.

In 2022, the then BJP government enacted the Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Act, popularly known as the anti-conversion law. Since the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government assumed office, it has repeatedly claimed to repeal the Act. The government has now completed 1,000 days in office and even celebrated the feat. Yet the law remains in force, despite repeated appeals from the Christian community.

According to the 2011 Census, Karnataka is home to 11.43 lakh Christians, of whom 5,04,863 live in Bengaluru. In the upcoming GBA polls, Christian votes are significant for the 'secular' Congress. Yet the party appears hesitant to withdraw the Act. The BJP, on the other hand, insists on strengthening it. Congress seems caught in a dilemma: repealing the law may consolidate Christian support, but it risks giving the BJP an opportunity to mobilise Hindu votes.

Unlike in previous decades, Congress can no longer assume that Christians constitute an unflinching voter base. The community is showing signs of political awakening and assertion. In local body elections in Dakshina Kannada and elsewhere, sections of Christian voters have reportedly shifted away from the Congress. The community is gearing up for a massive protest against the Congress seeking the repeal of the anti-conversion law.

The BJP and the broader Sangh Parivar ecosystem argue that anti-conversion laws are necessary to prevent religious conversion through force, deceit and influence. They contend that repealing such laws would allow proselytising without adequate safeguards.

The idea of restricting religious conversion is not new. In the 1930s and 40s, several princely states enforced laws to prevent such actions by missionaries. However, in the colonial era, such laws were localised, and their reach and enforcement were also strict.

In post-independence India, Article 25 of the Constitution guaranteed freedom to practise, propagate and spread religion. Despite this, anxieties around conversion persisted for socio-political reasons, prompting several states to introduce anti-conversion laws.

Since the previous BJP government enforced the anti-conversion law, there have been several atrocities against Christians on the pretext of conversion. Innocent Christians have been victimised, since the Act places the onus of proving that a conversion is not forced on the accused and not the complainant. Karnataka's anti-conversion law is not a neutral, regulatory law. It considers minorities as wrongdoers.

As per available data, there have been 13 cases of conversion accusations. There have been 11 cases of attacks on places of worship and nine cases of atrocities against women. In Uttar Pradesh, where the law is in force, the Christian community is suffering heavily.

Apart from Christian community leaders, human rights activists, legal experts with social concern and social justice adherents have contended that anti-conversion laws are clearly against the fundamental right of freedom of religion (article 25). Such laws are being misused to target minorities. Critics cite data to prove that such laws intend to confront minorities under the pretext of law, hence they are dangerous.

The anti-conversion law hinders the constitutional right of freedom of religion. Articles 25, 21 and 14 grant the right to practise, propagate and spread religion. Anti-conversion laws, especially when they mandate prior permission, may violate these rules and hinder voluntary conversions, according to experts. It's important to note that the law can be misused and even used to issue threats. According to one line of argument, withdrawing anti-conversion laws is the only constitutionally honest way.

The Congress has indicated that the law could be amended rather than repealed. But an amendment will legalise its flawed premise. Repeal would reaffirm Karnataka's commitment to constitutional freedoms, restore minority confidence and curb potential misuse by law enforcement. Thus, the law must not be amended but completely dropped.

B R Ambedkar had believed that choosing a religion was a man's fundamental right and personal choice. He rejected the idea that a person should be committed to the religion of his forefathers, even if the religion fails to establish dignity, equality and justice. When looked at from his perspective, the anti-conversion law is unconstitutional.

(The writer is a senior advocate and chairperson of the social justice wing of the Congress)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: MARCH 1976

New levies proposed in state

Bangalore, March 1
Finance Minister M. Y. Ghorpade today presented to the Karnataka Assembly a Rs. 28.78-cr deficit Budget for 1976-77. The additional taxes proposed include an increase in sales tax on all electric goods, heavy chemicals, lubricating oils, industrial and domestic fuel gases, tea, all kinds of paper, footwear and purchase tax on sugarcane payable by khandsari units. Mr. Ghorpade also increased the entertainment tax, stamp duty, education cess and health cess.

25 YEARS AGO: MARCH 2001

India condemns Taliban move to demolish statues

New Delhi, March 1
India today expressed outrage over the Taliban regime's reported move to go ahead with the destruction of all statues of religious and historical importance Afghanistan. "We are absolutely outraged by reports that the Taliban is persisting with its medieval programme," a spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said today as reports from Kabul suggested that the Taliban militia is going ahead with the recent decree of its supreme leader Mulla Omer.

OASIS | BHARATENDU SOOD

Don't allow your mind to get sick

I was watching *Sadhna*, a Hindi film from the 1960s directed by B R Chopra and starring Sunil Dutt as a college professor. In the film, his widowed mother longs for only son to marry so that she may have a daughter-in-law to care for both him and the household. But Sunil Dutt's character is reluctant. The anxiety and disappointment weigh so heavily on the old lady that she takes to bed. Medication fail to revive her spirits and even doctors seem helpless.

At this point, one of Sunil Dutt's aunts suggests an unusual solution. Even if he does not want truly wish to get married, he could at least bring a girl home so that his mother might pass away peacefully, believing her cherished wish fulfilled. Reluctantly he agrees, and a young woman is hired to visit daily for a week, posing as his prospective bride.

Lo and behold, things change dramatically. Instead of breathing her last, the old lady begins to recover. Within days, she is out of bed, her eyes bright with purpose, planning a the wedding with renewed enthusiasm. Till such time that she was mentally sick, her body refused to cooperate but once she recouped mentally, her body also regained health.

The lesson is simple but profound: even in the worst situations, we should not allow our mind to get sick. That can paralyse our entire body. To remain hopeful even in the worst situation is a great quality as was demonstrated by the Thai football team boys who remained entrapped in the tunnel for good seven days and our own workers who got trapped in the Uttarakhand Tunnel under construction, two years back,and could be taken out almost after a month or so.

To remain mentally healthy, the best way is to consciously avoid doing anything that can take away one's peace of mind. This is possible when one learns to manage stress, anxiety and maintain emotional well being. It is important to cultivate such godly qualities as humility, patience, tolerance for the views of others, contentment, control on wanton desires, practicing a sense of gratitude, compassion and to have a feeling of sharing and caring -- all of which play a key role in ensuring emotional well being.

From Khomeini's roots to Chabahar's reach: India's Iran connect

Indo-Persian trade and cultural ties stretch back nearly a millennium

SUMIT PANDE
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a joint US-Israeli strike has sparked sporadic protests in India, especially in cities and towns with substantial Shia populations.

Unlike his predecessor Ruhollah Khomeini, the father of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, had no Indian connection.

In 1988, Khamenei assumed power from Ruhollah Khomeini, whose grandfather Syed Ahmad Musavi Hindi belonged to Kitoor in Barabanki district, about 70 km east of Lucknow. Hindi migrated to Najaf in Iraq in 1830 and later settled in Khomeyn in Iran.

Many Shia clerics continue to visit Islamic seminaries in Najaf, Karbala in Iraq, and Qom in Iran for further studies.

The Indo-Persian trade and cultural relations are, however, of a much older vintage, going back almost a millennium. Ashrafpur-Kichaucha, a small town located 100 km east of Lucknow in Ambedkarnagar district, is home to the tomb of the third most revered Sufi saint in India. Built atop a small hillock, the shrine of Makhdoom Ashraf Jahangir Simnan attracts lakhs of followers every year and stands as a testament to a syncretic cultural evolution.

The Persian influence in the courts of the Nawabs of Avadh was evident. The royal family of Lucknow traced their origins to Nishapur in Khorasan province of the Safavid Empire in Iran. Under the Shia Nawabs, Lucknow emerged as the key centre of Shi'ism and Islam in the 18th and 19th centuries.

After the 1979 Revolution, Iran entered into a prolonged war on its western front with Iraq. India did a fine balancing act to protect its energy interests in West Asia. After the Cold War, the relations between the two countries warmed up with the visit of the then prime minister PV Narasimha Rao to Tehran in 1993. In 1995, the then president Rafsanjani made a reciprocal visit to India.

Atal Bihar Vajpayee, former PM and the Lok Sabha MP from Lucknow, further strengthened India-Iran ties on a wide range of issues, including strategic and defence cooperation, by signing the Tehran declaration in 2001 to meet India's strategic objectives in Central Asia and the west of Pakistan. In 2003, Iranian president Khatami was the chief guest at the annual Republic Day parade in Delhi.

Even as it firmed up its ties with Israel, India sought to, albeit judiciously, engage with Iran despite the Western sanctions over its nuclear programme imposed in 2006. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also travelled to Iran in 2016.

The development of the Chabahar port is one such project that has withstood the transition of power in New Delhi. Conceived to give a fillip to trade between India, Iran and Afghanistan, it also provides a crucial link to the International North-South Corridor between India, Iran and Russia (now joined by 11 other countries) to boost trade between the Central Asian Republics and beyond by providing a seamless cargo movement between Mumbai and Astrakhan, a Russian port in the Caspian Sea.

However, in a departure from long-standing practice, in the 2026 budget, the Government of India did not allocate Rs 100 crore for the Chabahar port.

SPANNING CENTURIES

- Persian influence shaped Nawabi courts
- Lucknow rose as Shia hub in 18th-19th centuries
- Narasimha Rao's 1993 Tehran visit thawed post-Cold War ties
- Vajpayee deepened relations with Iran
- India engaged Iran despite 2006 nuclear sanctions
- Chabahar port project endured political transition

Khamenei's death stirs grief in UP village

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

A pall of gloom descended on a small village in Uttar Pradesh's Barabanki district after Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in air strikes carried out by Israeli and US forces.

The village shares an ancestral link with Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini, Khamenei's mentor and the founding father of the Islamic Republic.

The killing triggered a wave of anger and grief among the residents of Kintur village in the district, where Khomeini's grandfather, Syed Ahmed Musavi Hindi, was born.

According to locals, Khomeini's ancestors migrated from Kintur to Najaf, an important Shia pilgrimage centre, and later to the Iranian city of Khomeyn in the 19th century.

A villager said they were shocked when they heard about Khamenei's death. "We are mourning his loss... we are praying for the well-being of all Indians currently in Iran," he added.

Locals recalled that there were once more than 500 homes belonging to the Musavi family. Over time, many families migrated and settled elsewhere, and today only five such homes remain.

Reports said that the Khomeini family played an important role in establishing one of Lucknow's oldest colleges.

From Srinagar to Lucknow, anger over Khamenei killing

Shutdown call in the Valley; UP clerics declare mourning

SRINAGAR/LUCKNOW, DHNS

The killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a reported joint US-Israel strike led to protests being witnessed in various parts of India.

Sentiments ranged from the killing being called an attack on the Muslim world to condemnation of the international community for its silence on the action.

Protests intensified across Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday evening, with Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq calling for a rare Valley-wide shutdown on Monday.

First large-scale protests in J&K since 2019

This was the first large-scale protest in J&K since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

Officials said all schools and colleges across the Valley would remain closed on Monday and Tuesday as a precautionary measure.

The decision came as demonstrations spread from Shia-majority pockets to mixed and Sunni-dominated areas, giving Sunday's mobilisation a broader political resonance. Traffic was briefly disrupted in parts of Srinagar, and some shut down for several hours, reopening by evening.

Several Sunni leaders and politicians also joined the protests. PDP leader Waheed Para and Zuhaib Yousuf Mir were seen at Lal Chowk with demonstrators.

Protests were also reported from the Budgam district and North Kashmir's Bandipora, including Shadipora and Sumbal. In the Shia-majority Kargil district of Ladakh, mourners assembled in the town centre, terming the strike an attack on the Muslim world.

In a statement, Mirwaiz described the strike as a "serious escalation" and criticised what he said was a lack of international accountability for Israel's actions. He, however, urged people to observe a peaceful shutdown.

Other religious leaders, including Agha Syed Hassan, Maulana Masroor Abbas, and Agha Syed Hadi, termed the development "deeply destabilising" with "grave implications" for West Asia and beyond.

Former J&K chief minister and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti expressed solidarity with Iran, asserting that "no missile or menace can extinguish its sovereignty or break its spirit".

Police officials said security was stepped up across Srinagar, Budgam, and Bandipora, with additional deployments in sensitive areas.

Mobile internet services were briefly suspended in parts of the Valley during the day, later restored at 2G speed, said officials.

In UP

The Shia community took to the streets on Sunday in several parts of Uttar Pradesh in protest against Khamenei's killing.

In Lucknow, thousands of Shias, including women, demonstrated near the historic Bara Imambara in the old city, chanting anti-Israel and anti-US slogans and hailing Khamenei as a "martyr".

A woman protester said the international community should condemn the killing in unequivocal terms.

Prominent Shia cleric Maulana Kalbe Jawwad called Khamenei's killing an "irreparable loss" for the Muslim community and humanity. He also declared a three-day mourning. The cleric appealed to the people to keep their shops and business establishments closed in this hour of grief.

Demonstrations were also reported from Jaunpur, Mirzapur, Sambhal and some other places.

Shiite Muslims gather during an anti-US and Israel protest in Srinagar on Sunday following the death of Iran supreme leader Ali Khamenei. AFP

Women from the Muslim community shout slogans during a protest, near Bara Imambara, in Lucknow. PTI

PM condemns attacks on UAE

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Amid tension in West Asia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday spoke to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, condemning the attacks on the UAE and condoling the loss of lives due to them.

"Spoke with President of the UAE, my brother Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Strongly condemned the attacks on the UAE and condoled the loss of lives in these attacks. India stands in solidarity with the UAE in these difficult times [sic]," the PM posted on X.

"Thanked him for taking care of the Indian community living in the UAE. We support de-escalation, regional peace, security and stability," he added.

According to the Union Ministry of Defence, the UAE air force and air defence systems had detected and destroyed hundreds of ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones.

Officials confirmed three deaths and 58 minor injuries resulting from debris fall, alongside material damage to several civilian properties.

One Indian injured

One of the injured is reportedly an Indian national, something that the Indian Embassy in the UAE has confirmed.

With flight services disrupted due to the military escalation, hundreds of Indians are stranded in Dubai and other key hub airports, with many of them taking to social media to appeal to the Indian government for assistance.

Modi chairs CCS meeting

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday night chaired a high-level meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to review the global situation arising from the escalating Iran-Israel-US conflict and assess its impact on India.

The CCS is headed by the PM, with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as members.

The meeting discussed the safety of Indians in West Asia, including those stranded, and deliberated on contingency measures if the situation deteriorates. With flight services disrupted due to the military escalation, hundreds of Indians are stranded in Dubai and other key hub airports. Many have taken to social media to appeal to the Indian government for assistance.

Oil tanker with 15 Indians hit by missile, 4 injured

NEW DELHI, DHNS: An oil tanker with 15 Indian nationals on board was hit by a missile attack amidst the ongoing military operations in West Asia. At least 4 injuries were reported, and the injured have been provided medical treatment.

The tanker was hit while it was cruising near the coast of Oman, close to the Strait of Hormuz.

The Iranian Revolutionary Guards had issued a statement saying the Strait was no longer open for transport, indicating Iran was preparing to choke the energy supply from half a dozen oil-producing US allies in the Gulf.

The Strait accounts for almost a fifth of the total global trade. Almost 20% of oil and gas passes through the narrow passage between Iran and Oman, with tankers in transit.

It is the sole sea route connecting OPEC nations like Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, and Iraq to the Arabian Sea and North America and Western Europe.

Oppn decries 'targeted assassination'

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Opposition on Sunday strongly condemned the "targeted assassination" of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other Iranian leaders by the "so-called leaders of the democratic world", calling it "utterly reprehensible" and a "betrayal of India's values, principles, concerns, and interests".

Congress general secretary and Lok Sabha MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said it was "tragic" that multiple nations had now been "dragged into conflict", while insisting that the world "needs peace, not more unnecessary wars".

"The targeted assassination of the leadership of a sovereign nation by the so-called leaders of the democratic world and the killing of multitudes of innocent people is despicable and deserves strong condemnation, no matter what the proclaimed reason for it is [sic]," she wrote on X.

Acknowledging the "differences" his party has with "certain non-democratic measures" adopted by the Iranian government, CPM general secretary M A Baby said Khamenei and other top officials' killings by the "imperialist United States and Zionist Israel" in violation of Iran's national sovereignty and international law was "utterly reprehensible".

Condemning the attack on Iran in "the strongest possible terms", he said the US had used similar tactics time and again in Latin America and elsewhere.

"We have seen their lies about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq being exposed. The experience of Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria is before our eyes. Once again, the American military-industrial complex is proving to be the biggest threat to world peace," he said.

He asked the Narendra Modi government to take the lead in rallying the Global South to voice its "highest condemnation of the excesses being committed by the US-Israel axis" in Iran, which had pushed it to take countermeasures.

The National Conference said in a statement that its president, Farooq Abdullah, "strongly denounced" the act, describing it as a "tragic and destabilising development with serious implications" for peace and stability in the region.

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE
Congress president

"The targeted use of force to destabilise the leadership and governing structures of a sovereign state, whether in Iran or earlier in Venezuela, signals a disturbing revival of regime-change doctrines and coercive unilateralism.

D RAJA
CPI leader

"The US-Israel nexus represents evil in its most naked form. To now assassinate a sitting head of state is to strip the so-called rules based order of its last pretence. Sovereignty clearly applies only to those aligned with Washington.

ANALYSIS

India's stakes in a shifting West Asia

K S TOMAR

The spiral of violence in Iran and across West Asia marks yet another inflection point in a region that has rarely known enduring calm. The widening arc of confrontation — between Tehran and its adversaries, and through proxy theatres stretching from the Levant to the Gulf — carries implications far beyond the immediate battlefield.

For India, which has centuries-old civilisational links with Persia and whose contemporary stakes in the Gulf are economic, strategic, and demographic, the turbulence demands a sober reassessment. This structural challenge touches energy flows, trade corridors, and diaspora security.

India-Iran ties have long rested on three pillars: energy security, connectivity, and geopolitical convergence in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Each cycle of confrontation tightens India's strategic space. When tensions spike, insurance premiums rise, shipping routes grow uncertain, and oil markets react instantly.

For an energy-dependent economy like India, crude-price volatility feeds inflation, widens the current account deficit, and strains public finances. Even with diversification of suppliers, Gulf instability affects landed costs and fiscal planning.

Connectivity is the second casualty. The Chabahar port project in Iran was planned for India's to access Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan. Sanctions and diplomatic uncertainty have blocked progress.

Iran has also served as a counterweight in Afghanistan against extremist forces inimical to both Tehran and New Delhi. If sectarian tensions deepen, Iran's capacity may shrink, weakening a quiet but valuable alignment.

New Delhi's response must rest on strategic autonomy without rhetorical adventurism. India maintains ties with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, and Iran alike; preserving this is essential. Any overt tilt risks alienating partners and endangering more than 8 million Indian expatriates in the Gulf.

Any overt tilt risks endangering eight million Indian expatriates in the Gulf. Simultaneously, India must accelerate energy hedging — diversifying suppliers across Africa and the Americas, expanding strategic petroleum reserves and strengthening long-term contracts. Limited, principled engagement with Tehran in non-sanctioned sectors should continue.

Scan the QR code to read full story

Asia's major economies — China, India, Japan and South Korea — would confront renewed energy insecurity. Prolonged violence risks reigniting ideological polarisation across the Arab street, pressuring governments that have prioritised modernisation over militancy. For India, the lesson is stark. West Asia's volatility is structural, rooted in great-power rivalry, and energy geopolitics. New Delhi's Iran policy cannot remain an isolated bilateral track — it must form part of a comprehensive West Asia doctrine balancing ties with Tehran, Gulf partners, and Israel.

In moments of conflagration, restraint is strategic. By safeguarding energy security, protecting its diaspora, and preserving diplomatic flexibility, India can maintain a steady compass even as West Asia convulses.

(The writer is a Shimla-based senior political analyst)

PM Modi slams DMK for 'stealing' from poor

MADURAI (TAMIL NADU), PTI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday slammed the ruling DMK dispensation in Tamil Nadu, allegedly for "stealing" from the poor, youth, and farmers, and said such a corrupt government had no moral right to continue.

Addressing a rally of the NDA, the second after the Maduranthakam event near Chennai on January 23, he said the people have decided to bring the NDA to power in Tamil Nadu, and he promised clean, efficient governance.

PM Narendra Modi in Madurai on Sunday. PTI

The AIADMK leads the NDA in Tamil Nadu.

"The DMK steals from the poor, youth, and farmers; such a corrupt government has no moral right to continue," Modi lashed out.

He flayed both the DMK and its ally, the Congress, on the ceding of Katchatheevu, an islet.

"To make it lose power, Congress took revenge against Tamil Nadu by giving away Katchatheevu. Then, the DMK did nothing," Modi charged.

He also accused the Congress-DMK alliance at the Centre earlier of banning Jallikattu. The BJP regime lifted it and also showed respect to Tamil culture by giving Sengol its place of pride in the Parliament, he added.

'Corrupt, dramebaaz, scared': Kejriwal's all-out attack against Modi

NEW DELHI, DHNS: AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi by calling him "corrupt", "dramebaaz" and one who is "scared" of activists like Sonam Wangchuk and women MPs in Parliament.

Addressing a 'jan sabha' organised by AAP here two days after a Delhi court discharged him and others in the liquor scam case, he said Modi does not take action against corruption because either he or people in his party or his friends are involved.

"Who does he imprison—Sonam Wangchuk, AAP MLA Mehraj Malik, Naresh Balyan, Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, and Sanjay Singh. He is scared of Wangchuk, who is a renowned innovator. When a dictator starts getting scared, then his end starts," he said.

"He did not go to Parliament one day. What was the reason? Because he was scared of women MPs, who he felt would beat him up. He is scared of women MPs. He is scared of Wangchuk, women MPs, Kejriwal,

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal addresses the gathering during a rally in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

Donald Trump, and America. How long will you survive by living in fear?" he said.

"He talks about Viksit Bharat (Developed India). Leave it, at least make it 'Rehenelayak Bharat' (Liveable India). Modi called me corrupt, but the court said I am honest...If Modi has guts, take action against those involved in drug smuggling and illicit liquor in Gujarat. Take action against giving his friend 1,000 acres of land for just Rs 1 per acre, on paper leak, etc.," he said.

"Modi will not take action. Either he or his party people or his friends are involved. Modi himself is involved in corruption," he said.

The AAP leader said that Modi has been doing 'Pareeksha pe Charcha' with students for the past 12 years, and a student who has been watching it regularly told him that after all this, when he appeared for a competitive exam, a paper leak occurred.

"Modi is doing 'dramebaazi' (threatrics). He does 'Pareeksha pe Charcha' but does not take any action against it. The future of people is at stake," he said.

PM Modi, Canada's Carney set to expand bilateral ties today

Talks may lead to forward movement towards civil-nuclear cooperation

NEW DELHI, PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney are set to roll out a broad framework on Monday to deepen India-Canada ties in areas of trade, energy and critical technology in the face of increasing geopolitical upheavals.

The two prime ministers will hold wide-ranging talks as part of a "substantive agenda" amid efforts by both sides to reset the bilateral ties that came under severe strain following a diplomatic row over the killing of a Khalistani separatist in 2023.

Carney landed in New Delhi on Sunday after spending two days in Mumbai, where he met several industry leaders.

As Modi and Carney are meeting against the backdrop of the attack on Iran by Israel and the US, the two leaders are expected to exchange views on the overall situation in West Asia.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney with PM Narendra Modi. REUTERS FILE

It is learnt that there could be some forward movement towards civil-nuclear cooperation between New Delhi and Ottawa. India is keen to seal a proposed deal that will allow it to procure uranium from Canada.

"There's a rapidly growing demand across India for more energy, technology, and services—exactly what Canada has to offer," the Canadian PM said on social media after arriving in the national capital.

"We're here to make sure our workers and businesses can seize these opportunities," he said.

It is learnt that following the Modi-Carney talks, the two sides may announce their resolve to soon conclude the proposed comprehensive economic partnership agreement.

In the face of its frosty trade ties with the Trump administration, Canada is looking at building a stronger, independent, and more resilient economy.

In the last few months, India and Canada have taken several steps to normalise their relations, which hit rock bottom following then PM Justin Trudeau's allegations in 2023 of a potential Indian link to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

SC asks Centre to rethink age criteria for Coast Guard

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court has said it was high time that regulations governing service conditions and retirement age of coast guard officers were revisited.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi asked the Central government to consider setting up an expert committee to reassess the criteria for defining "highly skilled" coast guard officers.

The court was hearing the Central government's appeal against last year's Delhi High Court order quashing Rule 20 of the Coast Guard Rules, 1986, which provided that officers of the rank of commandant and below would retire at the age of 57, while those above the rank of commandant would retire after turning 60.

Additional Solicitor General Archana Pathak Dave submitted that coast-guard work was different from that of other forces, as they faced harsher conditions at sea, similar to the Navy, which required a younger workforce.

The bench said the coast guard's evolving role was far beyond what anyone then could have imagined, yet the current retirement age reflected outdated patterns.

The court underscored that experience was vital in a sophisticated and highly skilled force, and cautioned the government against adopting an approach that was "too static or conservative" when framing service conditions.

BJD, Cong join hands to deny BJP third seat in Odisha

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The BJD and the Congress have joined hands for the Rajya Sabha elections in Odisha to support a "common candidate" to prevent the possibility of the BJP winning a third seat from the state.

The move assumes significance as this is the first time the BJD, which had severed ties with the BJP long back, and the Congress are coming together despite having no electoral alliance. The BJD had earlier forfeited its seat as well, on the BJP's request, to help Ashwani Vaishnaw win the Rajya Sabha election.

After talks with Odisha Congress president Bhakta Charan Das earlier last week, BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik on Saturday announced the candidature of Dr Santrupt Misra, who joined the party ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, and noted neurologist Dr Datteswar Hota, who was the first vice-chancellor of Odisha Health University.

While Misra will be fielded for the seat the BJD can easily win, Hota has been fielded for the fourth seat as a "common candidate", who would need the Congress and CPM votes to cross the hurdle.

The BJP has 79 MLAs in the 147-member Odisha Assembly, besides the support of three independents. The BJD has 50, including two who have been suspended, while the Congress has 14 and the CPM has one.

A candidate would need 31 first-preference votes to win, and the BJP can easily win two of the four seats going to the polls. However, it is short of 11 votes on the third seat.

Meanwhile, the BJD has a surplus of 19 votes, and the Opposition expects that Hota can win the electoral battle with the Congress and the CPM's support.

Das said the Congress was of the view that it should reach out to the BJD for a common candidate to prevent horse-trading and in the state's best interest.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and others, including general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal, were in the know, he said.

Bulldozers do the talking at Assam BJP yatra as CM Sarma promises more evictions

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

BJP workers on Sunday lined up bulldozers along a road in central Assam's Jagiroad and welcomed Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma by showering flowers from the blades—a symbolic celebration of the ongoing eviction drives — on the second day of the ruling party's Jan Ashirwad Yatra, organised as part of its preparations for the Assembly elections.

The Opposition Congress, meanwhile, continued its Samay Paribortonor Yatra ('Yatra for change in time') in eastern Assam, with party leader Gaurav Gogoi on Sunday exuding confidence that the Opposition alliance could usher in a change of guard in the state.

BJP flags fluttered on the bulldozers, while Sarma stood on the roof of a car and shook hands with the crowd, near Jagiroad, about 50 km east of Guwahati. Jagiroad is the Assembly constituency where Cabinet Minister Pijush Hazarika is seeking a second consecutive term.

Addressing the crowd, Sarma said his government, since May 2021, had cleared over 1.5 lakh bighas of land from encroachers. Sarma was referring to the eviction drives targeting Bengali-speaking Muslims, whom the BJP derogatorily refers to as miyas.

The yatra will continue for nine days.

Congress yatra

Addressing the Samay Paribartanar Yatra in Dibrugarh district, Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi said the BJP's failure to grant Scheduled Tribe status to six more ethnic communities would lead to its debacle.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

Hagar The Horrible

Beetle Bailey

Peanuts

Marvin

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

BAETA

OKRJE

CDOCRA

HMIPSR

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

©2025 Tribune Content Agency, LLC
All Rights Reserved.

Answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's | Jumbles: SNIFF BEGAN CANOPY FINISH
Answer: The quaint lodging establishment's new decor was stylish and — "INN" FASHION

◆SU-DO-KU-6843◆

					1		9	
	9		3					5
			7	8		3	6	
4		2				9		
	7						1	
		6				4		7
	3	1		9	4			
8					6		4	
	4		2					

medium

SOLUTION TO 6842

5	6	7	3	9	2	4	1	8
2	4	3	8	6	1	7	9	5
1	9	8	4	7	5	2	3	6
6	8	5	1	3	7	9	2	4
9	2	1	6	4	8	5	7	3
3	7	4	2	5	9	8	6	1
8	5	6	9	2	3	1	4	7
4	1	2	7	8	6	3	5	9
7	3	9	5	1	4	6	8	2

To solve the puzzle:
To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

HITORI-3297

3	1	4	2	4	6	7	6
2	4	5	4	6	7	4	3
7	6	1	5	2	4	1	4
4	1	3	6	8	8	5	7
8	4	1	4	7	2	1	6
4	2	1	7	1	3	4	4
6	3	7	1	1	4	4	2
1	7	1	4	3	1	2	8

SOLUTION TO 3296

	5	8	2		6	4	
5		6	3	2	8	7	4
8	7	1		6		3	
3	8		4	1	2		6
	3	7		5	4	1	8
7		3	1	4	5	2	
4	2		6	3		5	7
2	1	4	5		3	8	

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12364

ACROSS
3 Asian country (5)
8 Festive occasions (5)
10 Herb (5)
11 For every (3)
12 Compact, firm (5)
13 Part of a golf course (7)
15 Cut into cubes (5)
18 Still (3)
19 Scold harshly (6)
21 Reasons (7)
22 Act of lending (4)
23 Ammunition (4)
24 Personal belongings (7)
26 Bees are kept here (6)
29 Excess flesh (3)
31 Play (5)
32 Road-surfacing material (7)
34 Thing of value (5)
35 Doze (3)
36 Gorse (5)
37 Leprosy victim (5)
38 Prose composition (5)

DOWN
1 Spanish snacks (5)
2 Continue, persevere (5,2)
4 Nautical cry (4)
5 Tolerates (6)
6 Deepest point (5)
7 Fastening pin (5)
9 Hawaiian garland (3)
12 Gratify, make happy (7)
14 Not dry (3)
16 Pacifies (5)
17 Warehouse (5)
19 Advantage (7)
20 Appeal humbly (5)
21 Criminal organisation (5)
23 Adjusts, accustoms (7)
24 Rubs out (6)
25 Popular pet (3)
27 Haughty, arrogant (5)
28 Astonish (5)
30 Ward off (5)
32 Greek letter (4)
33 Orienteering item (3)

CRYPTIC

ACROSS
3 Where a bad lie, of course, is approximate? (5)
8 Weakens enough to point to the wrong list (5)
10 Do a stretch up the river (5)
11 You can make it hot for somebody (3)
12 Test match? (5)
13 White woman nominally (7)
15 Stimulate a youngster with a bit of hope (3,2)
18 It doesn't deserve full belief! (3)
19 There's reason, perhaps, to call a lady this (6)
21 Certain soldiers' right to be spaced out (7)
22 Around closing time, a boy may take an order (4)
23 Player to watch a lot? (4)
24 A smasher, once apt to lead seamen astray (7)
26 Hang on to one's position (4,2)
29 Is he timeless? (3)
31 Unwanted optical effects (5)
32 An entertainer, trite as can be (7)
34 If she gives you a ring, you'll hear from her (5)
35 Neither may come from '19 Across' (3)
36 Lived wildly, the rascal! (5)
37 Like the attraction of a rich man? (5)
38 Doing something knotty (5)

DOWN
1 Lordly name? (5)
2 He found Livingstone very remote (7)
4 A great character, possibly in panto (4)
5 They were fabulously sour to the fox (6)
6 She made a new start after breaking a heel (5)
7 Bitter about Charlie having to clean and polish (5)
9 Pleasant land? (3)
12 Being in this, you aren't really transported! (3,4)
14 Figures in plain clothes (3)
16 The ability to make some flower pots (5)
17 Tantrum in a flooded field (5)
19 Ghost that can give you the creeps around opening time (7)
20 Maybe tigerish fliers? (5)
21 RSVP (5)
23 Airmen's assembly for group discussion (7)
24 It's shrewd to get out of the way thus (6)
25 It's wholly associated with caboodle (3)
27 In polyglot terminology, a fish eater (5)
28 Such cards are no credit to anyone (5)
30 The last thing to give you warts? (5)
32 Did an avalanche engulf him? (4)
33 It's almost a toss-up whether he's sober (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 2669

ACROSS: 1 Sicily, 4 Acrostic, 9 Set out, 10 Man to man, 12 Adherent, 13 Virtue, 15 Nook, 16 French horn, 19 Dutch uncle, 20 Step, 23 Fathom, 25 On strike, 27 Confound, 28 Docile, 29 Treatise, 30 Attest.

DOWN: 1 Sustain, 2 Cut-throat, 3 Louvre, 5 Coax, 6 Outright, 7 Tempt, 8 Concern, 11 In print, 14 Inkling, 17 On thin ice, 18 Shoot-out, 19 Deficit, 21 Pretext, 22 Utmost, 24 Tense, 26 Onus.

SCRABBLE

©2025 Mattel, SCRABBLE™ and SCRABBLE tiles, including S1 tiles, are trademarks of Mattel.

E1 O1 S1 L1 E1 V4 V4 — Triple Word Score — RACK 1

A1 D2 Z10 E1 U1 U1 K5 — 4th Letter Triple — RACK 2

T1 L1 F4 A1 F4 E1 U1 — RACK 3

S1 P3 L1 Y4 O1 E1 R1 — Double Word Score — RACK 4

PAR SCORE 175-185
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

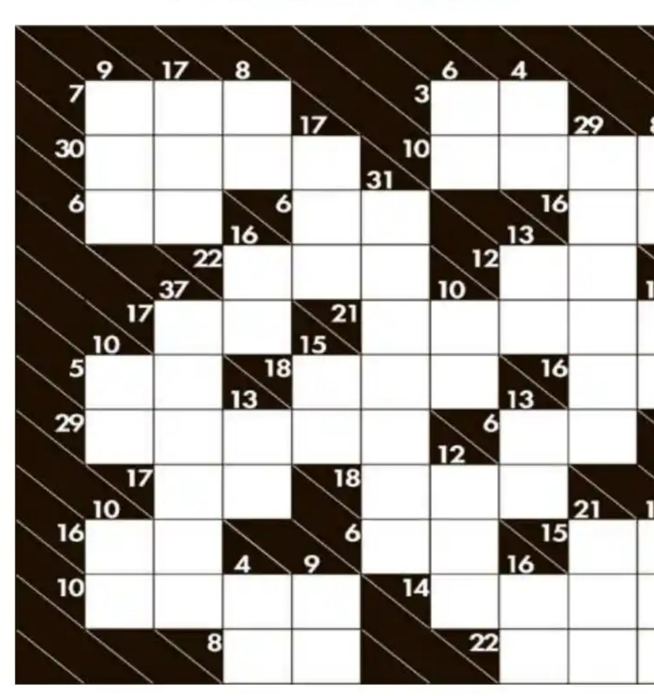
DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

D2 I1 S1 B3 A1 R1 S1 — RACK 1 = 80
P3 E1 E1 R1 A1 G2 E1 — RACK 2 = 80
F4 I1 G2 U1 R1 E1 D2 — RACK 3 = 86
L1 O1 C3 A1 L1 E1 S1 — RACK 4 = 77

PAR SCORE 210-220 — JUDD'S TOTAL 323

KAKURO- 3297



SOLUTION TO 3296

To solve the puzzle:
Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3843

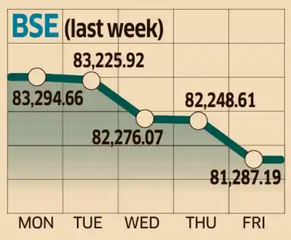
				7	4			8
				3	5			
				9		1		7
								2
	1					8		
2	5	8						
		9			7	4		
7	6			1	2			
				4		6		

SOLUTION TO 3842

7	8	9	4	2	1	5	6	3
2	3	4	6	5	8	9	7	1
1	6	5	7	9	3	2	4	8
5	1	8	9	4	6	7	3	2
9	2	3	1	8	7	6	5	4
6	4	7	5	3	2	1	8	9
8	5	1	3	6	9	4	2	7
3	9	6	2	7	4	8	1	5
4	7	2	8	1	5	3	9	6

To solve the puzzle:
The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

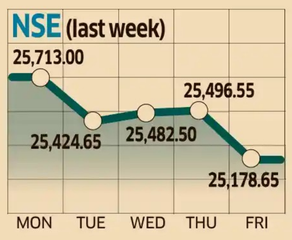
BSE (last week)



*Data as of Feb 27

TOP GAINERS		TOP LOSERS	
NTPC	2.36%	ETERNAL	-8.37%
TITAN	2.19%	TECHM	-6.86%
TATASTEEL	1.97%	BHARTIARTL	-4.95%
AXISBANK	1.14%	TRENT	-4.61%
HINDUNILVR	1.00%	ITC	-4.10%

NSE (last week)



TOP GAINERS		TOP LOSERS	
HERO MOTO	4.48%	ETERNAL	-8.59%
INDUSIND BK	4.32%	TECHM	-6.80%
APOLLO HOSP	2.71%	BHARTI AIRTEL	-4.96%
NTPC	2.40%	TRENT	-4.68%
JSW STEEL	2.34%	WIPRO	-4.24%

Sensex (52-week)

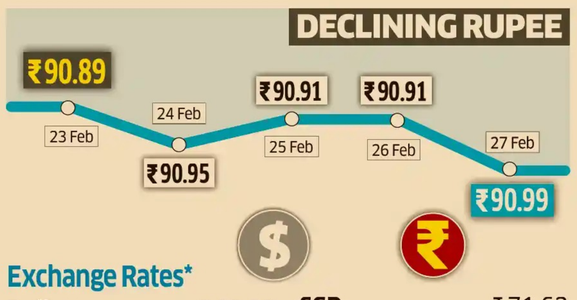
Feb 27, 2025	Feb 27, 2026	
74,612.43	81,287.19	8.95%

Nifty (52-week)

Feb 27, 2025	Feb 27, 2026	
22,545.05	25,178.65	11.68%

10-year Bond yield 6.66%

DECLINING RUPEE



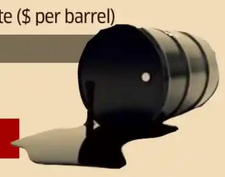
Exchange Rates*

Dollar	₹90.99	SGD	₹71.62
Pound	₹122.54	Yen (100 units)	₹58.34
Euro	₹107.36		

*Price at which banks sell

Crude Oil Rate ($ per barrel)

BRENT CRUDE
$72.48*
2.45%
*Rate as of Feb 27



Bengaluru fuel pump price*

(Retail)
Petrol* ₹102.96 ₹0.04% ↑
Diesel* ₹90.99 ₹0.00% ↔

*Rates as of Mar 1 #Rate change compared with yesterday

Commodity watch

COFFEE

Category	Rate (Rs per 50 kg)*
Arabica Parchment	₹22500 - 23000
Arabica Cherry	₹11900 - 13400
Robusta Parchment	₹17500 - 18000
Robusta Cherry	₹9600 - 10400

*Rates as on Feb 26

Other Commodities

Silkworm cocoon (Rs per kg)*

Bivoltine (BV)	₹809
Cross Breed (CB)	₹733

*Average rates as on Feb 27

Ships avoid Hormuz as reports say it's 'practically closed'

Owners cite war clause that allows cancelling of voyages amid hostilities

BLOOMBERG

Oil shipping has largely paused in the Strait of Hormuz that links the oil-rich Persian Gulf to the open seas after the US and Israel bombed Iran, with Iranian media saying the waterway is "practically closed."

Ships reported hearing a radio broadcast purporting to come from the Iranian Navy announcing that transit through the waterway was banned. There's been no formal announcement from Tehran about the status of the strait, which is crucial for the flow of oil and gas, but several tankers that had been heading toward Hormuz turned around in recent hours. A large number had already paused to wait near the entrance to the waterway after the bombing started.

The disruption is impacting everything from crude oil tankers to container ships that carry furniture. The Strait of Hormuz is a crucial chokepoint for energy markets, because a fifth of the world's seaborne oil and LNG typically passes through each day. It's unclear how long the disruption may last, and some vessels are continuing to sail through, though far fewer than would be normal.

Iran's Tasnim news agency, describing the waterway as effectively shut, said the IRGC warned ships that transiting Hormuz is not safe. German container liner Hapag-Lloyd AG subsequently said it is suspending transits through Hormuz due to its "official closure."

Despite a slowdown in traffic, some oil and gas carriers did appear to be continuing their journeys on Saturday afternoon, according to vessel tracking data compiled by Bloomberg. Automated tracking systems showed one large oil tanker leaving the Persian Gulf through the strait and another making the passage in the opposite direction.

Traffic had already reduced significantly in the wake of the attacks, and Bloomberg reported earlier that tankers were piling up both inside and outside of the entrance into the strait. The US issued a warning to shipping that vessels in the region should stay 30 nautical miles away from its military assets.

Japanese giant Nippon Yusen KK earlier told its fleet not to navigate Hormuz, while Greece told its vast merchant fleet to reassess passage, according to a circular.

The warning from Greece's shipping ministry also told ships to be ready to use "conventional" navigation methods that don't use electronics, citing the risk of interference while sailing in the region.

A prolonged disruption would be seismic for global oil trade. Futures markets were closed on Saturday and Sunday, giving reduced insight into how traders are really pricing risk.

However, a retail trading product, run by IG Group Ltd, was pricing West Texas Intermediate more than 8% higher on Saturday evening London time.

Traders are also watching for wider disruptions, including the impact of Iranian retaliatory strikes and whether any ports are being disrupted.

Oil tankers are coming to a stop on both sides of Hormuz, with three vessels halting journeys out of the Persian Gulf and a small flotilla of at least eight tankers building up over the past two weeks outside the Gulf of Oman. Others are aborting their voyages part way through the waterway.

Oil tankers pass through the Strait of Hormuz near Iran. REUTERS FILE PHOTO

Hormuz is also a vital transit rout for LNG. At least three gas tankers going to or from Qatar have paused voyages to avoid the waterway, according to ship-tracking data. Qatar is the world's second-largest LNG exporter, making up 20% of supply last year, and the country's shipments must pass through the strait to reach buyers in Asia and Europe.

Several container ships have also either halted, or U-turned while transiting, ship tracking data showed.

Some shipowners were considering canceling already-fixed voyages into the Middle East, shipbrokers said, citing a war clause that gives them the right to do so should hostilities break out between a list of countries, including the US and Iran. This could tighten the supply of vessels in the region, further supporting high freight rates that have recently soared to the highest level in years.

One tanker, Desh Abhimaan, appeared to U-turn midway through a transit through Hormuz on Saturday evening, instead turning away from the waterway. Still, other tankers appeared to be making their way toward Hormuz, despite naval warnings.

The supertanker Shaden came to a halt approaching the strait to leave the region with a cargo of Saudi crude, while the Chinese-owned New Vision appears to be continuing its outward transit. However, the ship's speed reported by its automated information system is erratic, veering between zero and 102 knots.

Earlier in the day, the very large crude carrier, KHK Empress, was part loaded with Omani crude and heading through Hormuz for Basra in Iraq, when it made a U-turn and headed back toward the Arabian Sea. The vessel's destination was changed from Basra to New Mangalore, where it's expected to arrive on Monday.

A build-up in vessels halting voyages toward Hormuz from the east had been going on for most of the week, tanker tracking data compiled by Bloomberg show.

Centre to convene meeting with exporters

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

In a bid to assess India's trade with West Asia, following the US and Israel jointly launching military strikes on Iran, the Union Ministry of Commerce has convened a meeting of exporters, shipping lines, freight forwarders and officials from concerned ministries on Monday.

The meeting will be held in hybrid mode to analyse the situation on India's trade, an official said. Already, exporters have expressed serious concerns that the war will affect trade routes through the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, both of which are key for movement of ships. They connects India to the Gulf countries, North America and Europe.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President SC Ralhan said the ongoing conflict has already begun to disrupt established global logistics channels.

INDIA'S EXPORTS*
$86.5 billion to the US
$98.4 billion to Europe
$58.8 billion to West Asia
Together, these regions account for about 56% of the country's merchandise exports.
*During FY2024-25

Apart from disruption of air routes, maritime trade through the Red Sea and key Gulf straits faces heightened uncertainty. If diversions become prolonged, shipments may increasingly have to reroute via the Cape of Good Hope, adding an estimated 15-20 days to transit time for Europe and the US, Ralhan has said.

Separately, the Indian Rice Exporters Federation has advised its members to avoid fresh cost, insurance and freight (CIF) commitments for Iran and parts of the Gulf, as the security situation in the region deteriorates and fears of restricted movement through Hormuz mount.

The federation, in an advisory to members on Sunday, asked exporters to switch, wherever possible, to free on board (FOB) terms — a structure under which the international buyer bears freight, insurance and related risks, so that Indian exporters are not left exposed to runaway costs on fixed-price contracts. The disruptions may push freight rates and insurance premiums for traders. Exporters stated that it may take a few days to get clarity on the availability of shipping capacity, new routes, insurance and freight rates.

West Asia has major routes through which India's exports to the biggest markets of the US and Europe pass.

India's exports to the US stood at $86.5 billion, $98.4 billion to Europe, and $58.8 billion to West Asia. Taken together, these regions account for about 56% of India's merchandise exports.

Freight rates are usually adjusted at the start of the month by major shipping lines, and on Monday, new rates will be published, he said. At the start of 2026, the rates were contracting.

AI not going to eliminate us; we'll do more & be busier: Cognizant's Hodjat

Says it's an intelligence that's very different from human intelligence

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

> "There is the 'state-of-the-art' in AI that is indeed changing and being pushed out every few months. Today, you have long running reasoning, agentic systems that are just autonomously, or semi-autonomously running and doing stuff. You set them out, and have them go off and do something, and then they come back and report to you every once in a while. This is new.
>
> **BABAK HODJAT**
> Chief AI Officer.
> Cognizant

Cognizant Chief AI Officer Babak Hodjat, who has been in the field of Artificial Intelligence for over 30 years, has said AI is not going to eliminate us, and that we will do more and be busier. Hodjat spoke to *DH* on the sidelines of the recent India AI Impact Summit 2026. He was in Egypt the previous week and went to San Francisco and San Diego, before attending the summit in New Delhi. He said the expectation was to be in all these places, because he had "work-related stuff" to do. "It has nothing to do with AI. It's just that the technology has come to a point where we expect more, and we do more. About 150 years ago, we didn't have the means to do this. If someone wanted to be at all these four different places, it would have taken them three months just to get around. So the expectation was lower," he said.

Hodjat, who is the AI pioneer, said he knows it is kind of counterintuitive, but each time a technology like this has come along that made us more productive, it also made us busier. "This is no exception, because this technology is not going to eliminate us. It's an intelligence that's very different from human intelligence, and therefore, the two have to work together. The intentionality is still with us; the goal-setting is still with us. Much of the responsibility is still with us, and so our role is there, but we can do more," he explained.

AI is useful and many people are starting to use it that the use cases are going to proliferate, and we will see AI in places that we didn't expect. Right now, we are scratching the surface and a lot of the use cases look like chat bots, very standard, or maybe it's for coding, but people are starting to experiment and use them in many other areas, he said.

"There is the 'state-of-the-art' in AI that is indeed changing and being pushed out every few months. Today, you have long running reasoning, agentic systems that are just autonomously, or semi-autonomously running and doing stuff. You set them out, and have them go off and do something, and then they come back and report to you every once in a while. This is new," he added.

According to Hodjat, we will have agents running at home and doing stuff for us. "Every once in a while, you can dial in, maybe WhatsApp to them and say, Hey, how are things at home? It might actually ping you back every once in a while, and say, Hey, your kid just came home. Everything's good. Don't worry. These sorts of things today are available and possible. But there's the question of the future. I think the rate of innovation in AI has gone up simply on account of more people paying attention to it. AI used to be a small niche. It was like a side event in the world of computing and programming. Today, it is mainstream, and so not only does it have a lot of users, but there are many researchers coming from different backgrounds who are looking to improve the state of the art. And that's why we're getting this higher frequency of innovation in AI," he explained.

Weaknesses exist

Hodjat pointed out that AI has weaknesses. "It's a different kind of intelligence and it's not like ours. You learn the world through lived experience. AI doesn't and that makes it a different kind of intelligence. And today, we don't know how to set up an AI that would learn through lived experience and have the same kind of abstractions and intelligence as we do. That's the weakness. AI is very process-heavy, so it needs a lot of processing capacity and memory. We don't, as humans, run much more efficiently. These are just some areas that might require complete rethinking of AI, like from the basics, we might have to rethink how we built it," he said.

Since we will be working with many agents, what if one agent hacks another? Hodjat explained that when the internet came out, for the longest time, people refused to do financial transactions on it, because it was insecure, until we found out how to have secure connections. Same analogy holds with AI agents. Today, it's the early days when a researcher puts something out there, security is not top of the mind for them. But as these technologies get adopted by more serious enterprises, these problems have to be solved, and the good news is, many have already been solved with the internet or with software in the past, he said.

In December last year, Cognizant opened its India AI Lab and Cognizant Moment Studio in Bengaluru to collaborate with clients and partners to help them move from proof-of-concept to scaled adoption with solutions that are quicker and at the same time usable. Hodjat said a lot of the research in the AI Lab is around reliability, trustworthiness, assessing confidence and uncertainty in AI agents, because it's demanded by clients. "Without that, you can't have an agentic enterprise," he said.

DH INTERVIEW

'We aren't necessarily looking to target a timeline for IPO'

Bengaluru-based ride-sharing and mobility platform Rapido, which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary, started its journey from the HSR-Koramangala-BTM area with an aim to create an affordable and convenient mode of transport for users. In an interaction with *DH*'s **Uma Kannan**, Rapido Co-founder **Pavan Guntupalli** says that a decade later, they have been able to operate in 17 cities and provide income opportunities to over 6 lakh people every single month. He adds that over these 10 years, 17,00,000 people have derived an income at some point in Karnataka alone. *Edited excerpts:*

It's been 10 years since you, along with co-founders Aravind Sanka and Rishikesh SR, began the Rapido service. How has the journey been in Karnataka?

One of the important things that has always encouraged us to pursue this journey, to create this category in this country, is that most of these people are underemployed or unemployed. We have almost 30% of people who are unemployed, with Rapido as their sole livelihood, and the rest 70% are youth, people doing blue-collar jobs. For each of these guys, we add around Rs 5,000 to Rs 12,000 extra income for a mere 4-6 hours of work.

In Bengaluru, we have around 2,00,000 people operating on Rapido every single month, deriving livelihoods. We are in 17 cities such as Hassan, Hubballi-Dharwad, Mangaluru, and Mysuru in Karnataka. Rapido is currently the largest ride-sharing player in the country.

We do more than 2 million rides only in bike taxis across 400 cities, and Rapido is currently the largest gig economy employer in the country, employing almost 30,00,000 captains every single month.

What about the average earnings that captains earn each month?

If a person works 10 hours a day, which is considered as a primary livelihood, the captains earn from Rs 20,000 to Rs 24,000. If the person works on average 4-5 hours a day, their average earnings would be around Rs 10,000. For us, Delhi, Hyderabad and Bengaluru are the top-3 cities. More than 50-60% of our captains are beyond Bengaluru — almost close to 4,00,000 every month.

Panic buttons and other advanced security features have become critical tools now. How is technology solving problems?

The safety of the customer is of paramount importance, which is something that we also consider at Rapido. We already have on our app, a Rapido SOS button, which directly connects to a 24/7 hotline that is always operational. People can track and share their rides with their friends. We go one step beyond as well. Now, if a person is going on a particular route and if he/she suddenly deviates from the expected route, or suddenly stops for a long time at an unexpected place, we immediately send a trigger to the customer to check if everything is okay. If there is no response, we initiate a call, especially during late night, to increase the security level. We contact them 10-20 minutes after the ride to check if everything is okay. There are ways to ensure security. One is leveraging technology. This is a heightened safety level and security measure, giving assurance to the customer that the ride is being tracked. If something is happening, there are systems, machines, and people watching, and they will contact you, and the customer also doesn't take any action to press the SOS button. But systems are taking action. So that is some of our dialogues with the government to make sure that we leverage technology more than the basics. While the SOS button is in the right direction, a scalable way is to leverage technology to do it in a much better way.

Pavan Guntupalli

How are you looking at the next 3-5 years? What are your plans?

Rapido is currently the market leader across bikes and autos, and close to market leadership, second player in cabs. Overall, all three categories combined, Rapido is the largest ride-sharing platform. Now the focus is mostly going to be not just market leadership, but on ensuring drivers come on an application. We believe that every ride that happens on an app is much safer, and from the driver's perspective, it's more efficient. Our focus is going to be more on enabling more autos and cabs that are still not participating in the online economy, to come and participate. We will be focusing heavily on ensuring that the participation of women, the percentage of women captains in the overall captain base, is steadily and consistently increasing both in the big and smaller cities.

Founders have shed promoter tags for IPO. Are you targeting an IPO by this year-end?

For us, IPO is not a necessary timeline-based event, as of now. We would keep ourselves ready, but we would only go for it at the right time. We are not aiming for a timeline. As a company, we are growing operationally profitable, and we have enough funds to ensure our growth plans as well. We aren't necessarily looking to target a timeline for an IPO.

TOP PICKS

The data is sourced from Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited

Siemens Energy
(ID: ENRIN)
BUY
Upside +24%**
Last close ₹2,897
Target: ₹3,600*

Polycab
(ID: POLYCAB)
BUY
Upside +13%**
Last close ₹8,469
Target: ₹9,600*

Lenskart Solutions
(ID: LENSKART)
BUY
Upside +19%**
Last close ₹505
Target: ₹600*

Kirloskar Oil Engines
(ID: KIRLOSENG)
BUY
Upside +15%**
Last close ₹1,393
Target: ₹1,600*

Northern Arch
(ID: NORTHARC)
BUY
Upside +44%**
Last close ₹250
Target: ₹360*

* Target price has been calculated on the basis of fundamentals ** Upside refers to more value stock is expected to generate than its current price

Two strategies to help women invest better in equities

Making investments has become easier than ever, but making investment choices has become harder than ever.

Till a decade ago, investing required paperwork and intermediaries. Today, anyone can open an account in minutes, automate SIPs, track markets in real time and access thousands of funds and products from a phone. But decision-making has become more challenging with so many different products and schemes, especially where equities are concerned. Not surprising, with over 7,500 listed stocks, over 10 equity mutual fund categories and over 2,500 mutual fund schemes in India — analysing between these options is a task further made difficult with so much content and opinions on social media.

Investors are no longer excluded, they are overwhelmed, especially women. Not much has changed over the years, where women's financial literacy is concerned. They largely remain dependent on someone (family member/ friend/ colleagues/ social media) for investment advice. Often, they are unsure about the soundness of this advice. As with men, women investors are prone to trend-chasing, short-term focus and being unsettled by volatility. All of these factors lead to indecision and hold women back from investing in equities.

The age-old advice would be to choose simple funds like index funds or flexicap funds, but in reality, performance-chasing and volatility leads to churn even in these funds. This is where balanced advantage funds can play a big role. These funds invest in stocks and bonds, and adjust the allocation based upon market conditions. Rather than depending on timing calls, these funds use a systematic approach, that shifts towards bonds in overheated markets and adds equity when valuations are attractive. Through tactical allocation between equity and debt in periods of volatility or elevated valuations, the fund aims to limit downside risk. By moderating the impact of sharp corrections, the strategy helps investors remain invested for the long term, through market cycles.

MRIN AGARWAL
FINANCIAL EDUCATOR & FOUNDER, FINSAFE INDIA PVT LTD

Multi-asset funds have gained popularity over the last few years due to good returns, mainly driven by the allocation to gold and silver in the portfolios. Balanced advantage funds would be preferred over these funds from an equity perspective due to higher allocation to equities and the fact that women already have high exposure to physical gold and silver.

Within the balanced advantage fund category, each scheme follows its own model and it is advisable to choose a fund with higher equity allocation, as debt allocation is already met with other investments like fixed deposits and insurance plans. Women investors should also note that balanced advantage fund returns will be lower than regular equity funds due to the debt allocation and regular risk balancing. If an investor can stay invested through cycles, pure equity funds are more likely to deliver better long-term returns than balanced advantage funds. Thus the choice really is between a steady, but lower returning investment or a more volatile, higher returning investment. Women must choose the one which aligns better with their risk tolerance and temperament.

Increasing the investment in a structed manner through an annual step-up can enhance the portfolio corpus drastically. A monthly SIP of Rs 25,000 for 15 years in equities, will grow to Rs 1.19 crore, assuming 12% p.a. returns. Increasing this monthly SIP amount by 10% annually, will yield a corpus of Rs 2.07 crore. Women investors who are confused about equity investing, can follow these simple strategies to ensure long term wealth creation. Happy Women's Day!

All about new Income Tax Rules and Forms - 2026

Number of Rules & Forms to go down from 511 to 333, and from 399 to 190, respectively

PRABHAKAR K S

India's 65-year-old Income Tax law regime is finally set for a replacement. The new Income Tax Act, 2025, along with the Income Tax Rules, 2026, will come into force on April 1, 2026. On February 8, this year, the tax department released a set of corresponding draft 'Income Tax Rules, 2026, and related Forms' for stakeholder consultation. All the suggestions received are now under review and will be adopted in the final rules, if found appropriate. Its final notification is expected in the next few days. Let us look at the proposed changes:

Income Tax Rules, 2026

Permanent Account Number: The draft ITRs, 2026, proposed major changes to the mandatory PAN requirements. Rule 159 lists out 16 transactions for its mandatory quoting. To avail credit card, open an account with depository, purchase of mutual funds above Rs 50,000, purchase of securities above Rs 1 lakh per transaction, cash deposit aggregating to Rs 10 lakh in one or more account, cash withdrawal aggregate to Rs 10 lakh from one or more bank account or post office, sale or purchase of motor vehicle and motorcycle above Rs 5 lakh (currently, motor vehicles only), buying unlisted shares amount exceeding Rs 1 lakh per transaction, purchase or sale of gift or joint development agreement in case of immovable property above Rs 20 lakh (currently, Rs 10 lakh), payment exceeding Rs 1 lakh to a hotel/restaurant at any one time (currently, Rs 50,000) and sale or purchase of goods or services of any other nature exceeding Rs 2 lakh per transaction, among others.

House Rent Allowance: HRA, inserted in 1964, to meet the dwelling house's rent-related expenses. Since inception, the I-T law has recognised only four cities — Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi — as 'Metro Cities' for 50% of the basic salary and 40% in the case of other cities for computation.

Interestingly, the Constitution of India in June 1993 itself recognised other cities such as Bengaluru, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Kochi, Madurai, Thiruvananthapuram, and others, as 'metros'. After more than six decades / three decades, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, and Ahmedabad finally made in to the list. It is a taxpayer-friendly change brought without waiting for the completion of the long-pending Population Census-2027, which is yet to commence in April 2026.

Further, HRA-related 'Form No. 124' explicitly seeks the 'Relationship with the landlord', meaning, hereinafter the taxpayer, needs to disclose whether he/she is paying rent to whom and under what capacity. That is, the tax department can easily analyse the pattern across the country and know whether the rent is genuine or using parents, siblings or close relatives for tax savings.

Outdated special allowances: There are allowances for employees working under certain conditions. Children's education allowance — Rs 100 per month/ child, up to two children, now proposed to increase to Rs 3,000 per month/ child, up to two children; to meet hostel expenditure of an employee's child — Rs 300 per month, up to two children, now proposed to increase to Rs 9,000 per month per child, up to two children.

Tax-free perquisites: The draft ITRs, 2026, have also proposed to simplify perquisite valuation rules, upward revision of tax-exemption limits on car, chauffeur, gifts, meal vouchers, educational and medical benefits. Motorcar partly used for official, and if running/maintenance borne by employer, upward revision is Rs 5,000 per month — up to 1.6-litre, or Rs 7,000 per month — above 1.6-litre + Rs 3000, if chauffeur provided. Car partly used for official, and if private expenses borne by employee, upward revision is Rs 2,000 per month — up to 1.6-litre, or Rs 3,000 per month — above 1.6-litre + Rs 3,000, if chauffeur provided. Similarly, a gift from the employer — up to Rs 15,000, meal vouchers — up to Rs 200 per meal, education facility — up to Rs 3,000 per month/child and loan for medical treatments — up to Rs 2 lakh.

Related I-T forms

The draft ITRs, 2026, has proposed a complete revamp of the existing forms. Change in the number of commonly-used forms is — PAN application Form No. 49A to be renamed as Form No. 94, TDS Certificate-Salary Form No. 16 as Form No. 130, TDS Certificate-Others Form No. 16A as Form 131, Form 26AS as Form 168, etc.

The total number of Rules and Forms will be reduced from 511 to 333, and from 399 to 190, respectively. As many as 178 current rules and 209 forms have been rationalised and removed, if not required. The new law's core objectives are simple language, digital and easier compliance, a taxpayer-centric approach, transparency, and aligning with best global practices.

(The writer is Founder & CEO, Shree Tax Chambers)

AI reshaping the AVGC ecosystem, says Kharge

BENGALURU, DHNS: IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge on Sunday said AI is fundamentally transforming content creation workflows across animation, gaming and immersive media. He said AI could reduce production timelines significantly, while lowering costs by up to 25-40% in certain animation workflows, enabling regional creators to reach global audiences.

Addressing the valedictory ceremony of Bengaluru GAFX 2026, Kharge highlighted that the AVGC (Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics) sector has evolved beyond entertainment to become a critical pillar of the digital and creative economy.

IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge at the Bengaluru GAFX valedictory on Sunday.

"The AVGC sector today is not just about animation or gaming — it represents digital exports, cultural influence, youth employment and India's creative soft power in a rapidly evolving AI-driven world," he said.

AI-driven tools are already enabling faster concept creation and storyboarding, automated animation and rendering optimisation, dynamic game environment generation, reduced production cycles and operational costs, and greater accessibility for smaller studios to compete globally.

Priority initiatives

The minister also announced several priority initiatives aimed at strengthening the state's leadership in creative technology. The state will work toward an integrated AVGC-AI ecosystem supporting R&D, innovation and advanced creative technologies.

The government will also explore structured guidelines covering AI training datasets, copyright protection, royalty structures and digital likeness rights to safeguard creators.

Karnataka will adopt a hub-and-spoke model to develop creative technology clusters beyond Bengaluru, expanding opportunities across regions, and will introduce a regulatory sandbox mechanism enabling innovators to test emerging technologies, even before formal policy frameworks are established.

WEEK AHEAD

Equities likely to move sideways this week

Selective cyclical themes linked to capex and industrial demand continue to offer opportunity

SIDDHARTHA KHEMKA

Indian equities are likely to remain sideways with a cautious undertone in week amid persistent global volatility, with domestic growth indicators and sectoral momentum offering underlying support. Institutional flows and macro developments will be key determinants of near-term direction. In this backdrop, we recommend a calibrated shift toward domestic-facing sectors with stronger earnings visibility and relatively lower exposure to AI-related disruption. Financials, insurance, FMCG and healthcare appear comparatively resilient, even as selective cyclical themes linked to capex and industrial demand continue to offer opportunity.

On the macro front, key global releases next week include US S&P Global Manufacturing PMI, Eurozone CPI, China PMI and US unemployment data. On the macro front, key global data releases next week include the US S&P Global Manufacturing PMI, Eurozone Consumer Price Index, China Purchasing Managers' Index and US unemployment data. On the domestic front, monthly automobile sales numbers will be announced, where demand momentum across most segments continues to remain healthy. With improving retail traction and an expected wholesales push in the fourth quarter, inventory levels at original equipment manufacturers are likely to stay lean, which should gradually reduce discounting intensity in the coming months and support margins.

Key global data releases
- US S&P Global Manufacturing PMI
- Eurozone CPI
- China PMI
- US unemployment data
- India automobile sales numbers

On the domestic front, India's Q3 FY26 GDP, released on February 27 under the new FY2022–23 base year series, came around 7.8%, indicating resilient and broad-based economic growth supported by steady domestic demand and improved sectoral momentum.

Recent global diplomatic developments also remain in focus. During PM Modi's visit to Israel, the two nations signed 17 agreements across defence, AI, agriculture, cyber cooperation and digital payments, while reaffirming collaboration on innovation and regional connectivity initiatives such as IMEC. Meanwhile, Canadian PM's visit to India signalled efforts to reset bilateral ties, with discussions centred on advancing a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and expanding cooperation across energy, AI and defence.

The uncertainty around the US's next course of action and its implications for energy stability and regional risk sentiment are likely to keep participation measured. Markets are likely to remain sensitive to further developments, particularly given their implications for energy stability and regional risk sentiment.

Benchmark indices remained relatively stable through February. However, . The Nifty declined 2% over this week, while the Midcap100 and Smallcap100 extended losses, each falling over 1.2%. Sectoral performance reflected broad-based strength, with Metals (+3.3%), PSU Banks (+3.3%), Energy (+2.6%) and Pharma (+2.3%) emerged as key gainers. In contrast, Nifty IT was the major dragger in, declining sharply (-5%) amid continued concerns around AI-driven disruption and its implications for traditional outsourcing-led growth models. The debate within IT is increasingly shifting toward how value within the technology stack is redistributed rather than whether AI poses an existential risk.

After nearly seven consecutive months of selling amounting to over Rs 2.25 lakh crore in the cash segment, FIIs have turned marginal net buyers in February. While the inflows remain modest relative to prior outflows, the directional shift is noteworthy. Stabilising global bond yields and improved risk-reward in select large-cap segments appear to be aiding sentiment. However, sustainability of flows will depend on crude price trends, geopolitical developments and global liquidity conditions.

The broader capex cycle remains supportive, with Centre and state spending rising over 14% YoY in 9MFY26 and projected near 7% of GDP in FY27, sustaining infrastructure momentum and steady order inflows across transmission, renewables and railways, alongside a gradual private capex revival. Capital goods continue to benefit from strong execution visibility and stable margins. Metals remain constructive, supported by firm base metal prices, easing global trade concerns, a softer dollar, and structural demand from electrification, renewables, grid expansion and data centre investments.

(The writer is Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited)

Silver, gold may surge as West Asia tensions intensify, say analysts

NEW DELHI, PTI: Precious metal prices are likely to see a fiery start to the week when trading resumes on Monday, as investors would rush for safe-haven assets amid global uncertainties, following the escalating tensions in West Asia, analysts said.

United States President Donald Trump announced "major combat operations" in Iran after Israeli strikes on Tehran. Iranian state media confirmed the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday, triggering retaliations from Iran against US military installations and Israeli targets in the region.

Analysts said that the extent of the impact on domestic silver and gold prices will depend on how long the conflict persists, as global investors recalibrate risk exposure amid fears of a prolonged instability.

Besides, they added that the geopolitical situation, macroeconomic data announcements (including manufacturing/ services PMI from across regions), and US retail sales and non-farm payroll and employment data toward the end of the week will be factors.

On the Multi-Commodity Exchange (MCX), silver futures for the March contract surged Rs 22,054 or 8.72%, while gold for April contract rose Rs 5,228, or 3.33%, over the past week.

POULTRY PIVOT

From hatchery to omnichannel: How Nandu's is rewiring India's meat retail

HRITHIK KIRAN BAGADE
BENGALURU, DHNS

Meat is a deeply "passionate purchase". Ensuring consumers derive a wholesome experience when they select high-quality chicken, mutton or seafood for a weekend feast has been an evolving journey for Nandu's Foods.

The brand traces its roots to 1989, when PS Nanda Kumar launched a processed foods venture. Known affectionately as "Nandu" in the poultry industry, he ran the business for three years before returning to his poultry operations. In 2005, his son, Narendra Pasuparthy, a software engineer in the US, returned to India, and was involved in some ventures and also oversaw the family's poultry business in Dubai — before formally establishing Nandu's Foods in its current avatar in 2016.

Today, Nandu's Foods — part of the Nanda Group — has evolved into an omnichannel meat brand built on integrated farming. Its proposition: natural, hormone-free and antibiotic-free chicken, alongside seafood and mutton products.

The parent group operates as a broiler-breeding company. It sources parent birds, cross-breeds them, incubates the eggs in its hatcheries and produces around six million chicks a month. Five million are sold to independent farmers, while one million are grown under Nandu's Foods' integrated farming model.

"In integrated farming, the farmer brings labour and infrastructure. We provide the chicks, feed, veterinary care and tech-enabled monitoring systems. The investment is ours," Pasuparthy tells *DH*.

The company works with over 600 integrated farmers across South and East India. Once the birds reach 2-2.1 kg, they are routed through Nandu's retail channels for sale to consumers directly.

Supporting this ecosystem are three feed mills producing 80,000 tonnes of natural feed annually — a corn-and-soya blend enriched with vitamins and minerals. The group operates across eight states — Assam, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra — with 20 breeding farms and hatcheries. Farms are selected after stringent checks on infrastructure, biosecurity and farmer integrity.

Narendra Pasuparthy

The poultry journey began decades earlier. In the 1960s, Nanda Kumar started as a layer farmer with 500 birds in Banashankari, Bengaluru, supplying eggs to hotels. At a time when backyard poultry dominated, he and some peers helped pioneer scientific poultry breeding and processing in India.

"Layer birds lay eggs for consumption and breeding. Today, a larger part of our business is breeding broilers. These chicks are bred for weight gain and lack reproductive ability. The hens may be hybridised, but not genetically-modified," Pasuparthy says.

After years of selling chicks to farmers and birds to traders, the company moved downstream in 2016 with its own meat retailing business, under the brand — Nandu's Foods.

The Indian meat market is estimated at over $55 billion, of which poultry contributes about $35 billion. Yet most of it remains unorganised, dominated by neighbourhood butcher shops.

"Back in 2016, only 12-13% of consumers buying offline were comfortable purchasing from chilled chicken stores," he says. "We grow birds far from cities, move them directly to processing plants while maintaining cold chain, and ensure hygienic handling throughout."

The company operates one processing plant in Bengaluru. Today, Nandu's runs over 50 company-owned stores, largely in Bengaluru, with some presence in Hyderabad, and serves more than 35 cities through quick commerce partnerships. About 50% of revenue comes from offline retail.

Nandu's differentiates through chilled — not frozen — chicken. "Chilled is freshly produced, never frozen, stored at 0-4 degrees Celsius. Frozen is stored at -18 degrees Celsius. Chilled chicken must be consumed within 3-4 days," he explains.

To serve other cities online, the company has established regional production centres and smaller processing units. Roughly half of the one million chicks grown under integrated farming are sold as Nandu's branded products. Expansion of infrastructure is underway.

Within a few years of launching its hyperlocal omnichannel format, Nandu's has scaled to a monthly revenue run-rate exceeding Rs 15 crore. It reported revenues of Rs 121 crore in FY24 and Rs 143 crore in FY25, and is on track for a Rs 165 crore run-rate in FY26.

While the company continues to invest in new stores, it emphasises disciplined expansion and strong unit economics. About 60% of revenue comes from chicken sales. However, consumer preference is shifting toward convenience.

Ready-to-Eat (RTE) and Ready-to-Cook (RTC) products grew 20% year-on-year and now contribute nearly 19% of total revenues — a share that is rising steadily.

"We plan to enter Chennai, Kochi and other metros next year with our omnichannel model," Pasuparthy concludes.

Key events leading up to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's killing

Increasing tensions with US and Israel

●**Long-standing** hostility over Iran's regional influence, support for proxy groups, including Hezbollah and Hamas

●Disputes over its nuclear programme contributed to growing confrontation with the United States and Israel.

Previous military strikes

●**Coordinated Israeli** and US air strikes in June 2025, damaged Iranian nuclear facilities and killed several senior commanders

●It significantly weakened Iran's military leadership, signalling a shift to confrontation.

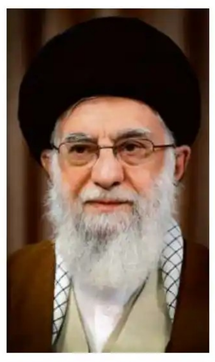
Domestic unrest in Iran

●**Widespread protests** over economic hardship, political repression, and human rights abuses – including crackdowns that killed and detained thousands of protesters – eroded Khamenei's internal legitimacy and intensified international scrutiny.

Targeted airstrike on Tehran

●CIA intelligence indicating **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** would attend a meeting of top Iranian officials helped guide strikes.

●Reports indicate that one of the strikes directly hit Khamenei's residence/office compound in Tehran, killing him along with several other senior officials and some family members.



Operation Epic Fury (February-March 2026): The US and Israel launched a large-scale military campaign, starting February 28, 2026, targeting Iranian leadership and strategic sites with coordinated air and missile strikes across Iran.

THE MEN AT THE HELM IN IRAN

THE PRESIDENT

●President **Masoud Pezeshkian**, 71, is one of three members of the interim council leading the country until a new supreme leader is elected.

●The reformist heart surgeon-turned-politician took office in June 2024 after his predecessor died in a helicopter crash.

●Born in 1954 in Mahabad, to a Turkic father and Kurdish mother, he is seen as a calm technocrat.

●He has steered the govt through last year's 12-day war with Israel and protests over rising living costs.

THE JUDICIARY CHIEF

●Shiite cleric **Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei**, about 68, is also on the interim council.

●Born in Ejeh village in Isfahan province, he has long served in Iran's judiciary and security apparatus and was appointed judiciary chief in 2021 by Khamenei.

He studied in Qom, holds a master's in international law, and bears the clerical rank of hojatoleslam, one rank below ayatollah.

●In 2010, he was placed under US sanctions for alleged human rights abuses tied to the 2009 protest crackdown.

THE JURIST

●Cleric **Alireza Arafi**, 65, heads Iran's centre for managing Shiite seminaries and sits on the interim council.

●He is also second vice president of the Assembly of Experts, which appoints and oversees the supreme leader, and a member of the Guardian Council. Arafi moved to Qom in 1971 to study Islamic sciences and was briefly jailed at 16 for opposing the Shah.

●The youngest and least known of the three council members, he has generally adopted a cautious tone.

THE SECURITY CHIEF

●**Ali Larijani**, 68, is currently the head of Iran's top security body, the Supreme National Security Council.

●A veteran of Iran's military, media and parliament, he is seen as having enjoyed Khamenei's confidence.

●Born in Najaf in 1957 to a prominent cleric close to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Larijani comes from an influential political family.

Emergency personnel work at the site of an Iranian strike in Israel. REUTERS

10 dead in protests at US missions across Pakistan

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI/LAHORE, PTI: At least 10 people were killed in firing when protesters tried to storm the US Consulate in Karachi as violent clashes and arson rocked different cities of Pakistan on Sunday over the killing of Shiite supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei was killed on Saturday in a coordinated US-Israeli airstrike on Tehran with his death confirmed on Sunday, prompting an outburst of anger by Pakistan's Shiites, who are about 20 per cent of the 240 million population.

The US Embassy in Islamabad said it is monitoring reports of ongoing demonstrations at the US Consulate General in Karachi and Lahore even as Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi requested the citizens not to take the law into their hands and "record their protest peacefully."

Apart from Karachi and Lahore, protests were also held in major cities, including Islamabad, Peshawar, and Quetta, where protesters clashed with law enforcement officers, who on several occasions resorted to shelling to disperse the crowds, The News International said in a report.

Violent clashes occurred in the coastal city of Karachi in Sindh province where angry proctors tried to attack the US Consulate building on Mai Kolachi Road and security personnel tried to stop them.

Dr Mohammad Sabir Memon, the executive director of Civil Hospital Karachi's (CHK) Trauma Centre, told Dawn that 10 had died and 31 were injured in the wake of protests near the Consulate.

Khamenei's death triggers joy and grief in Iran

A woman takes a selfie while holding a photo of Iranian opposition figure and son of the last Shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi, during a drive-by celebration in London, on Sunday. AFP

Exposes deep fault line in the country stunned by sudden demise of its supreme leader

DUBAI, REUTERS

Some Iranians grieved while others celebrated the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, exposing a deep fault line in a country stunned by the sudden demise of the man who ruled for 36 years.

Iranian state TV announced his death in the early hours of Sunday, the voice of the broadcaster breaking with emotion as he confirmed Khamenei had been killed in the US-Israeli attack on Saturday. Footage from Tehran showed mourners packed into a square, dressed in black and many of them weeping.

But videos posted on social media showed joy and defiance elsewhere, with people cheering as a statue was toppled in the city of Dehloran in Ilam province, dancing in the streets of Karaj city, near Tehran in Alborz province, and celebrating in the streets of Izeh in Khuzestan province.

In the town of Galleh Dar in southern Iran, people knocked down a monument commemorating Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who founded the Islamic Republic in 1979, a video on social media showed.

"Am I dreaming? Hello to the new world!" a man can be heard shouting in the video, as fires burned on a traffic circle where the monument was toppled, prompting cheers and applause.

Another video showed people celebrating in the town of Lapuee in southern Iran outside the house of a 15-year-old teenager, Pooya Jafari, who was shot dead during anti-government protests in January.

Thousands of Iranians were killed during a crackdown on anti-government protests in January, the deadliest wave of unrest since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Trump and Israel to pay 'heavy price'

Announcing the attack on Iran on Saturday, US President Donald Trump urged Iranians to seize the moment to topple the government.

At a rally mourning Khamenei's death in Tehran, one man said the news had filled him with hatred "towards Israel and America. We must avenge the blood of the leader."

"We said last night until the morning that God willing, it is a lie. Unfortunately, it was the truth," said a woman mourning Khamenei's death, in a pool report via WANA.

Khamenei's rule faced numerous waves of unrest over the decades, including student-led protests in 1999 and 2002, unrest in 2009, and the more recent "Woman, Life, Freedom" protests of 2022, triggered by the death of a young woman while she was in the custody of the morality police.

A 33-year-old woman from Isfahan said she began crying from a mix of joy and disbelief when she heard Khamenei was dead. Speaking to Reuters from Iran, she said she joined others dancing in the street to "share my happiness with my people", expressing hope that his death would mean the end of the Islamic Republic.

But Atousa Mirzade, a primary school teacher in the central city of Shiraz, said she could not be happy about the country's leader being killed by a foreign power.

"I also cannot be happy because I don't know what will happen to our country. We saw what happened in Iraq — chaos and bloodshed. I would prefer the Islamic Republic to that situation."

University student Hossein Dadbakhsh, 21, in Mashhad, said Iran would avenge its leader.

WHAT THEY SAID

"I have given instructions for the continuation of the campaign. Yesterday, we eliminated the tyrant Khamenei. Along with him, we eliminated dozens of senior figures of the oppressive regime. Our forces are now striking at the heart of Tehran with increasing intensity, and this will only continue to escalate further over the coming days.

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU
Israeli Prime Minister

"The killing was carried out in a cynical violation of all norms of human morality and international law.

VLADIMIR PUTIN
Russian President

"The attack and killing of Iran's Supreme Leader is a grave violation of Iran's sovereignty and security. It tramples on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and basic norms in international relations. China firmly opposes and strongly condemns it.

WANG YI
Chinese Foreign Minister

"With Khamenei gone, there is renewed hope for the people of Iran. We must ensure that the future is theirs to claim and shape. At the same time, this moment carries a real risk of instability that could push the region into a spiral of violence.

URSULA VON DER LEYEN
European Commissioner

"I am following with deep concern what is happening in the Middle East and in Iran during this tumultuous time. Stability and peace are not achieved through mutual threats, nor through the use of weapons, which sow destruction, suffering, and death, but only through reasonable, sincere, and responsible dialogue.

POPE LEO XIV
Head of the Catholic Church

The man who ruled Tehran with defiance and brutality

DUBAI, AP

When targeted by nationwide protests early this year, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei unleashed the bloodiest crackdown of his nearly four decades in power. But now a US or Israeli military strike ended his rule.

The 86-year-old Khamenei tried to avert such strikes as the US built up its military presence in the region to pressure Tehran over its nuclear programme. He warned that if the US struck, a regional war would ensue. At the same time, he allowed Iran to enter negotiations with the US over its nuclear programme.

Long before the supreme leader's compound was among the first targets on Saturday, Khamenei was under growing pressure.

The suppression of the protests, with thousands of people killed amid chants of "Death to Khamenei," was a sign of the threat that popular anger represented. Years of sanctions, economic mismanagement and corruption have gutted Iran's economy.

Meanwhile Israeli and US bombardment during last summer's 12-day war heavily damaged Iran's nuclear program, missile systems and military capabilities. Iran's network of regional proxies, including Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen, has been weakened by Israeli and U.S. attacks since the war in Gaza began, along with Tehran's influence across the Middle East.

Transforming the Islamic Republic

When he rose to power in 1989, Khamenei had to overcome deep doubts about his authority. A low-level cleric at the time, Khamenei lacked the religious credentials of his predecessor, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of the Islamic Revolution.

But Khamenei has ruled three times longer than the late Khomeini and has shaped Iran perhaps even more dramatically. In the eyes of hard-liners, Khamenei stands as the unquestionable authority - below only that of God. At the same time, Khamenei built the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard into the dominant player in military and internal politics. It boasts Iran's most elite military and oversees its ballistic missile program. Khamenei also gave the Guard a free hand to build a network of businesses and dominate the economy. In return, the Guard became his loyal shock force.

Domestic challenges

The first major threat to Khamenei's grip was the reform movement that swept into a parliamentary majority and the presidency soon after he became supreme leader. It advocated for giving greater power to elected officials, which Khamenei's hard-line supporters feared would lead to dismantling the Islamic Republic system.

Khamenei rallied the clerical establishment, and unelected bodies run by mullahs shut down major reforms and barred reform candidates from elections.

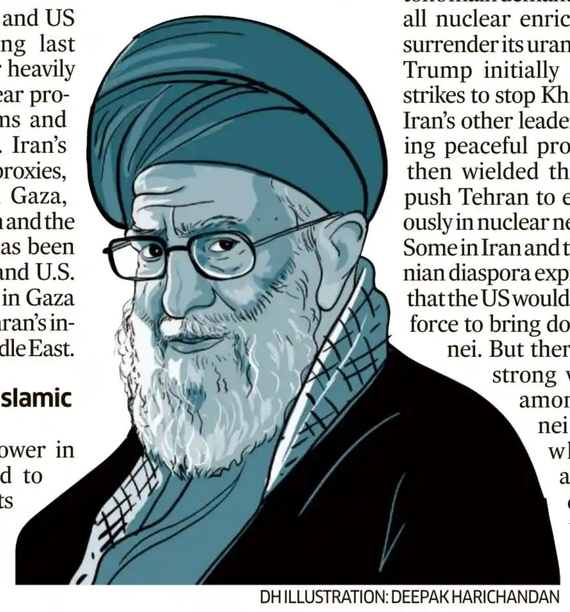
Since then, waves of popular protests have been crushed.

Huge nationwide demonstrations erupted in 2009 over allegations of vote-rigging. Under the weight of sanctions, economic protests broke out in 2017 and 2019. More came in 2022 over the death of Mahsa Amini, who was detained by police for not wearing her mandatory headscarf properly.

Crackdowns against the protesters killed hundreds, and hundreds more were arrested amid reports of detainees tortured to death or raped in prison.

Nuclear negotiations

By agreeing to nuclear negotiations, Khamenei likely sought to buy time to avert US strikes. But Iran opposed Washington's main demands that it halt all nuclear enrichment and surrender its uranium stocks. Trump initially threatened strikes to stop Khamenei and Iran's other leaders from killing peaceful protesters. He then wielded the threat to push Tehran to engage seriously in nuclear negotiations. Some in Iran and the large Iranian diaspora expressed hope that the US would use military force to bring down Khamenei. But there were also strong voices even among Khamenei opponents who were against foreign intervention to topple the theocracy.



DH ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN

DH
DECCAN HERALD
Obituaries & Remembrance Advertisements
Log on to : https://homages.deccanherald.com
or
Scan QR code to access booking form

ETERNAL REMEMBRANCE

Smt. VIJAYALAKSHMI B. S.
APRIL 1955 - MARCH 2025
WIFE OF SRI DAYAKAR D.C.
Retired Assistant Director of Agriculture
Though you have been physically absent for the past one year, your spirit lives on among us, and we continue to feel your guidance in everything we do.
We constantly pray for eternal peace to your divine soul.
Loving Husband, Children, Daughters-in-law, and Family Members Mob: 9448361656

Despite massive US attack, regime change unlikely in Tehran

WASHINGTON, NYT

US intelligence agencies produced multiple scenarios in recent weeks of what could happen in Iran after a joint US and Israeli strike designed to kill senior leaders and weaken the current government.

But one of those scenarios suggested that a complete change in government was unlikely. Instead, it said, members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard were likely to assert a larger degree of control but might be willing to curb the country's nuclear program or take a more conciliatory stance to the US.

In striking Iran on Saturday and urging its citizens to rise up and replace its government, President Donald Trump was judging that he could engineer an outcome that would be beneficial in the long run to the security of the US and Israel. But in doing so, he set in motion events that could be hard to control and that could leave Iran in chaos for some time.

Many questions remain about how much effort the US will put into changing the Iranian government. Without any troops in Iran — which the Trump administration has said it wants to avoid — the US' ability to influence what comes next is limited, according to people briefed on the intelligence and planning for the strikes.

The intelligence assessments before the strike considered the likelihood of multiple scenarios playing out after a strike designed to weaken the current leadership. And US officials stressed that the joint strike on leadership targets and military sites in Iran had created a high degree of uncertainty around all of the potential scenarios.

But intelligence agencies believe the organised opposition in and outside Iran remains relatively weak.

Hackers hit Iranian websites

MARCH, REUTERS: A wave of cyber-enabled operations took place early Saturday morning alongside the joint U.S.-Israeli attack on targets across Iran.

The operations included the hacking of multiple news websites to display various messages and the hack of BadeSaba, a religious calendar app, which displayed messages telling users "It's time for reckoning".

UAE shuts embassy in Iran

DUBAI, AFP: The United Arab Emirates was shuttering its embassy in Iran and recalling its ambassador, a statement from the foreign ministry said on Sunday, following a barrage of Iranian attacks targeting the Emirates. "The UAE announces closure of its embassy in Tehran and withdrawal of its ambassador and all members of its diplomatic mission," the statement said.

'Shout' down govt: Pahlavi

WASHINGTON, AFP: The exiled son of Iran's last shah urged Iranians on Sunday to stage nightly street protests to help overthrow the government as the United States and Israel maintained massive air strikes on the country's military and leadership.

US-based Reza Pahlavi said the death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, means the current regime is now "drawing its final breaths."

DH Classifieds

BUSINESS

Business to Business

Hotel & Restaurant

WELL FURNISHED
Restaurant with well equipped kitchen & Everything in 1000 Sft area for SALE or RENT in Posh Vijaya Bank Layout, Bannerghatta Road. Lease Agreement Transferable. For Details Call: 9900001954

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Graphic Designers

REQUIRED GRAPHIC
Designer- Photoshop/ Corel Draw/ Illustrator. Experience 1 Year or Above in around Rajajinagar Contact: 9902891620/ 9845579620

BUILDERS ESSENTIAL

Water Proofing

LEAKAGE... LEAKAGE... Old/New Building, Sump, Bathroom, Wallcrack, Skylight, Terrace Waterproofing done by New Technology- 9880916988

TOURS & TRAVEL

Travel Agencies

DUBAI TOUR 6 Days, Vietnam Tour 6 Days, Bangkok Tour 5 Days,Krabi Phuket 5 Days SuvarnaYatra 6360146483/ 9008381022

Kyiv says Russia accepted US plan for Ukraine security guarantees

Geneva hosted the latest round of peace talks last week

KYIV, REUTERS

Russia said at recent talks in Geneva it would accept the US proposal for Ukraine's post-war security guarantees, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff said on Saturday.

"At the last talks, the Russian side said for example that they would accept the security guarantees offered to Ukraine by the United States," said top aide Kyrylo Budanov in an interview aired on Ukrainian television.

US President Donald Trump is urging Moscow and Kyiv to strike an agreement to end Europe's biggest war since 1945, though Zelenskyy has complained that his country is facing more pressure to make concessions.

Ukraine is seeking iron-clad security guarantees which commit the U.S. and its European allies to action if Russia attacks again after a peace deal is reached.

The last round of peace talks, which took place in Geneva last week, did not achieve a breakthrough and was described as difficult by Kyiv and Moscow, although Washington said it saw "meaningful progress." Budanov also said that at present, Russia had not agreed to a summit between Zelenskiy and Russian President Vladimir Putin, which had been floated earlier as a possibility by US special envoy Steve Witkoff.

Russian 'shadow fleet' tanker seized

Belgium's special forces boarded and seized an oil tanker from the "shadow fleet" Russia uses to circumvent Western sanctions over the war in Ukraine, the government said on Sunday.

Deputy Prime Minister Maxime Prevot said the vessel was intercepted in the North Sea during an overnight operation.

"Today, a vessel from Russia's shadow fleet was intercepted in the North Sea," Prevot wrote on X, thanking Belgian special forces for their "exceptional professionalism and courage".

Belgian Defence Minister Theo Francken said the intercepted tanker was "being escorted to the port of Zeebrugge, where it will be seized".

Russia has used a flotilla of ageing tankers of opaque ownership to get around restrictions on its lucrative crude exports imposed over its 2022 all-out invasion of Ukraine.

The European Union has blacklisted hundreds of vessels in a bid to sap Moscow's war chest.

Blasts in Kabul as Afghan govt says responding to Pak attacks

KABUL, AFP: Explosions were heard in the Afghan capital Kabul Sunday, AFP journalists said, with the Taliban government saying they were responding to aerial Pakistan attacks.

A spokesman for Afghanistan's defence ministry said that "air defence strikes were carried out against Pakistani aircraft in Kabul".

Months of cross-border clashes have flared again since Thursday, when Afghanistan launched an offensive along the frontier, with Pakistani forces hitting back on the border and from the skies.

The renewed violence came after Afghan residents and officials said troops from both countries had been battling along the border, with the fighting coming alongside multiple strikes including the former US air base at Bagram.

Earlier, residents in multiple areas bordering Pakistan told AFP of fighting, while the Afghan government said three people were killed overnight in drone strikes and shelling.

North of the capital Kabul, air strikes "hit Bagram air base", according to a resident who AFP is not naming for security reasons.

A second resident said "it was very strong, which shook the area. There was smoke and fire coming out north of the airport", describing the dawn raid as "very terrifying".

The provincial spokesman, Fazl ul Rahim Maskin Yar, said Pakistani jets "attempted to bomb" the base, but there were no casualties or damage.

Pakistan acknowledged bombing key cities Friday including Kabul and Kandahar, which is home to Afghanistan's supreme leader, but has not commented on Sunday's strikes.

The presence of security forces was boosted in central Kabul on Sunday evening.

3 dead, 14 injured after shooting at bar in Austin, Texas

AUSTIN (US), AP: Authorities say three people were killed, and 14 others were wounded after a shooting at a bar in Austin, Texas.

Austin Police Chief Lisa Davis said at a press conference early Sunday that police received a call for reports of a "male shooting" at Buford's, a popular beer garden in the city's entertainment district.

When police arrived at the scene, they confronted a man with a gun and then "returned fire, killing the suspect." EMS Chief Robert Luckritz said three people were found dead at the scene, and 14 people were injured and transported to hospitals. Of those injured, three were in critical condition.

Medical workers arrived to the scene less than a minute after they received a call, officials said.

Savita Punia

Savita opts out as India name squad

HYDERABAD, PTI: Veteran goalkeeper and former skipper Savita Punia has opted out of Women World Cup Qualifiers due to personal reasons as Hockey India on Sunday named a 20-member squad, to be led by mid-fielder Salima Tete.

The FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 Qualifiers is scheduled to be held in Hyderabad from March 8 to 14.

Hosts India, England, Scotland, Korea, Italy, Uruguay, Wales, and Austria will be competing for three qualification spots at the FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium & Netherlands 2026 set to be held in August.

The teams are divided into two pools, with England, Korea, Italy, and Austria in Pool A, while hosts India, Scotland, Uruguay, and Wales in Pool B.

According to sources, Savita has taken a break for family reasons. "Savita was not part of the national camp ahead of the tournament as she opted out due to family reasons. That's why there was no reason to consider her," a source said.

Seasoned Salima will continue to lead the side.

Squad: Goalkeepers: Bansari Solanki, Bichu Devi Kharibam. **Defenders:** Sushila Chanu Pukhrambam, Nikki Pradhan, Manisha Chauhan, Udita, Ishika Chaudhary. **Midfielders:** Neha, Salima Tete, Sunelita Toppo, Sakshi Rana, Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke, Rutaja Dadaso Pisal, Deepika Soreng. **Forwards:** Navneet Kaur, Ishika, Lalremsiami, Beauty Dungdung, Baljeet Kaur, Annu.

Suraj pilots Ashwa Veeram to feature win

DELHI RESULTS

Ashwa Veeram, from the stables of S Nawab and ridden by Suraj Narredu, won the Ravindergarh North India Derby, the feature event of the Delhi races on Sunday.

1. Sweet Relation Plate (Div-I) - 1100M: Missey Boy (S M Abbas) Sameer Qureshi 1; Royal Baby (Ankit Pal) 2; Dubai Falcon (Vishal) 3; Maya (Varun) 4; Wb: 2-3/4, 1-1/2L, Shd. T: 1-05.41. TB: S M Abbas. Fav: Lady Danger.

2. Sweet Relation Plate (Div-II) - 1100M: Alex (Vinay Kumar) Varun 1; Telekinesis (Rakesh) 2; Kaftan (Ankit Pal) 3; Weronika (Sunny Kumar) 4; Not Run: Aegir. Wb: Hd, 2, 2-1/4L.T: 1-06. 20. TB: K.Ali Khan. Fav: Telekinesis.

3. Kargil War Heroes Memorial Trophy - 1400M: Ashwa Kangto (Ravinder Pal Singh) G Vivek 1; Tripurari (Akash Rajput) 2; Golden Sun (Rakesh) 3; Master Multitude (Angad) 4; Not Run: Eyes On The Prize. 2-1/4, 1-1/4, 1L. 1-24.79. TB: S Nawab. Fav: Ashwa Kangto.

4. Nandini Kesarganj Trophy (Div-I) - 1400M: Galway Bay (Sunil Kumar Verma) Angad 1; Lucky Lips (Aasif Khan) 2; Jaat Hero (Vishal) 3; Ashwa Wazeer (Vishal Shivhare) 4; Wb: 3-1/2, 3/4, 1/2L. T: 1-25.54. TB: S M Abbas. Fav: Ashwa Wazeer.

5. Nandini Kesarganj Trophy (Div-I) - 1400M: Master Stoute (Sunil Kumer Verma) Angad 1; Burning Desire (Aasif Khan) 2; Chieftain (Saurav Rawat) 3; Ticker (Faizan Khan) 4; Wb: 3-1/4, 1-1/2, 1-1/2L. T: 1-26.43. TB: S M Abbas. Fav: Master Stoute.

6. Ravidergarh North India Derby - 1600M: Ashwa Veeram (Ravinder Pal Singh) Suraj Narredu 1; Havana Sky (Arjun) 2; Rocket Rod (Shivam) 3; Ashwa Changez (G Vivek) 4; Wb: 8-3/4, 3/4, 1/2L. T: 1-37.80. TB: S Nawab. Fav: Ashwa Veeram.

7. Chairman Emeritius Cup - 1200M: Ashwa Bravo (Ravinder Pal Singh) G.Vivek 1; Ashwa Tokyo (Vishal Shivhare) 2; Ashwa Vedha (Sameer Qureshi) 3; Ashwa Kanchenjunga (Suraj Narredu) 4; Wb: 5-1/2, 2-1/4, 5-3/4L. T: 1-10.80. TB: S Nawab. Fav: Ashwa Bravo.

8. Good Decision Plate - 1400M: Banksy (Rustom Daroga) Dhanu Deora 1; Daring Diva (Jai Parkash) 2; Master Bomber (Angad) 3; Poly Czar (Kundan Paswan) 4; Wb: 1/2, 4-1/4, 1-3/4L. T: 1-27.32. TB: Sarfaraz Khan. Fav: Poly Czar.

Bengaluru dividends:
I race: Rs 54w; 16, 22, 19p; Fc: Rs 950; Q: Rs 454; Shp: Rs 61; Thp: Rs 53; Tri: Rs 15,338 & 1,460; 3 Ex: Rs 51,373.
II race: Rs 93w; 14, 14, 15p; Fc: Rs 260; Q: Rs 79; Shp: Rs 27; Thp: Rs 45; Tri: Rs 587 & 330; Ex: Rs 4,999 & 2,008.
III race: Rs 19w; 11, 12, 16p; Fc: Rs 38; Q: Rs 24; Shp: Rs 31; Thp: Rs 34; Tri: Rs 109 & 39; Ex: Rs 190 & 75.
IV race: Rs 34w; 15, 22, 26p; Fc: Rs 380; Q: Rs 191; Shp: Rs 57; Thp: Rs; 90; Tri: Rs 2,580 & 1,843; Ex: Rs 19,946 & 5,698.
V race: Rs 28w; 14, 16, 22p; Fc: Rs 239; Q: Rs 163; Shp: Rs 44; Thp: Rs 65; Tri: Rs 2,151 & 683; Ex: Rs 13,178 & 16,943.
VI race: Rs 11w; 10, 20, 11p; Fc: Rs 51; Q: Rs 41; Shp: Rs 54; Thp: Rs 29; Tri: Rs 139 & 41; Ex: Rs 188 & 95.
VII race: Rs 14w; 10, 15, 15p; Fc: Rs 36; Q: Rs 43; Shp: Rs 48; Thp: Rs 41; Tri: Rs 262 & 120; Ex: Rs 519 & 106.
VIII race: Rs 69w; 16, 17, 23p; Fc: Rs 287; Q: Rs 121; Shp: Rs 44; Thp: Rs 65; Tri: Rs 1,106 & 621; Ex: Rs 1,265 & 542.
Jackpot: Rs 5,547 (105). **Runner-up**: Rs 157 (1593). **I treble**: Rs 777 (100). **II treble**: Rs 222 (438).

◆ ON TV ◆

FOOTBALL

La Liga: Real Madrid vs Getafe (1:30 am, Tuesday). **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

CRICKET RANJI TROPHY

Lack of skills on flat decks evident

K'taka pacers appeared to struggle on unhelpful tracks

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
HUBBALLI, DHNS

Cliched as it might sound, Karnataka's run to the final of the Ranji Trophy from Rajkot to Hubballi this season was a roller coaster ride.

Having picked up just four points from the first two games, they shifted gears and amped up their intensity along the way and dominated when in control.

A slip up at home had their tournament in jeopardy; their captain was replaced, and once they had a new skipper and flew in India internationals, they finished second in their group.

Following a fighting win over Mumbai (quarters) and a stamp of authority against Uttarakhand (semis), they ran out of steam in the final hurdle.

"We wanted to finish it on a high, didn't happen. It's a work in progress. We will keep improving," Yere Goud said.

The word in and around the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium here, however, was that Auqib Nabi's outrageous skill to make the ball talk on a lifeless wicket, was the difference between the two sides.

Incidentally, when Karnataka won their last title 11 years ago, they were not completely dependent on surfaces with Vinay Kumar and Sreenath Arvind in their ranks -- the two bowlers who possessed skills to hit the seam and extract movement off even docile surfaces.

This time, Karnataka needed all the assistance they got from the pitches for outright wins, and failed to pick up 20 wickets in six out of the 10 games. And in the final, they picked up 14 wickets in 286.1 overs.

In the four matches they managed to take all 20, two were on spin-friendly conditions in Mangalapuram (vs Kerala) and in Hubballi (vs Chandigarh).

"Not giving any reason but things didn't go our way (in the final). A few edges and the result could have been much different in the end. They tried their best but it didn't happen."

While Vidwath Kaverappa and Vyshak Vijaykumar bring in the variety of bounce and pace, respectively, Karnataka currently miss a bowler who could dry up one end and frustrate the batters.

They will need to develop a bowler who will stifle the opposition by challenging their edges and pads consistently and make batters play more often, especially with surfaces that ask for patience out of the bowler -- something that Vasuki Koushik had done so well for them a couple of seasons before shifting to Goa.

Vidyadhar Patil, only 13 matches old in first-class cricket, showcased his talent by moving the ball both ways while picking up 19 wickets.

While Prasidh Krishna's (18 wickets) presence handed Karnataka a massive boost, there will certainly be doubts over his availability throughout the season.

Talking about the spinners, Shreyas Gopal did all the heavy lifting and picked up 48 wickets. While the supporting Shikhar Shetty (22) and Mohsin Khan (15) showed promise, the inadequacies came out when Shreyas had an off-day.

While bowling has a fair bit of issues, the ageing batting order and availability factor are another issue.

Karun Nair and Mayank Agarwal, 34 and 35, respectively, collectively scored 1377 runs with four hundreds to their name. And were two of their top three highest run-getters. Team should have suitable replacements ready as and when the veteran duo step aside.

New skipper Devdutt Padikkal is constantly knocking on the India doors while K L Rahul availability is always going to scarce.

While Karnataka have unearthed a proper middle-order batter in Smaran R, who emerged as the leading run-scorer in the tournament, they will need to start backing some from under-23 pipeline.

While Shreyas Gopal (left) proved a great asset with his splendid all-round show, Smaran R built on a good display from the previous season to emerge as the tournament's top-scorer. DH FILE PHOTOS

NUMBERS GAME

Top batters

Smaran R
M: 9; R: 950; **HS: 227***; Avg: 86.36

Karun Nair
M: 9; R: 699; **HS: 233**; Avg: 58.25

Mayank Agarwal
M: 10; R: 678; **HS: 160**; Avg: 42.37

Top bowlers

Shreyas Gopal
M: 10; W: 48; Avg: 23.14; **BBI: 8/110**

Shikhar Shetty
M: 8; W: 22; Avg: 42.00; **BBI: 6/61**

Vidwath Kaverappa
M: 6; W: 21; Avg: 20.04; **BBI: 5/51**

Navara holds Gukesh; Aravindh loses to Keymer

PRAGUE, PTI: World champion D Gukesh's hunt for his first victory continued as he was held to a draw by David Navara of Czech Republic in the fourth round of the Prague International Chess Festival here.

On a day when Jorden van Foreest of Holland nosed ahead of the field with his third victory in four games, defending champion Aravindh Chithambaram went down fighting against Vincent Keymer of Germany.

Van Foreest defeated Nodirbek Yakubboev of Uzbekistan while the other two games in the 10-player round-robin tournament ended in draws.

American Hans Moke Niemann drew with Parham Maghsoodloo of Iran and David Anton Guijarro got the same result against Nodirbek Yakubboev of Uzbekistan.

With five rounds still to come and the event knocking on the doors of crossing the half-way barrier, van Foreest, on three points, is now followed by Abdusattorov and Navara, who in turn are a half point ahead of Yakubboev, Keymer and Guijarro.

The remaining four participants -- Chithambaram, Gukesh, Niemann and Maghsoodloo -- are all tied on the seventh spot on 1.5 points apiece.

Results (round 4): Nodirbek Yakubboaev (UZB, 2) lt to Jorden van Foreest (NED, 3;) D Gukesh (IND, 1.5) drew David Navara (CZE, 2.5); David Anton Guijarro (ESP, 1.5) drew Nodirbek Abdusattorov (UZB, 2.5); Vincent Keymer (GER, 2) bt Aravindh Chithamabaram (IND, 1.5); Hans Moke Niemann (USA, 1.5) drew Parham Maghsoodloo (IRI, 1.5).
Challengers: Daniil Yuffa (ESP, 1.5) bt Jiner Zhu (CHN, 1); Benjamin Gledura (HUN, 1.5) bt Joans Buhl Bjerre (DEN, 2); Jachym Nemec (CZE, 2.5) drew Thomas Beerdsen (NED, 2.5); Stepn Hrbek (CZE, 2.5) drew Surya Shekhar Ganguly (IND, 1); Divya Deshmukh (IND, 1.5) drew Finek Vanclav (CZE, 3).

'Safe' Sindhu recounts 'tense and scary' ordeal after explosion

NEW DELHI, PTI: PV Sindhu (**in pic**) on Sunday described a "tense and scary" ordeal at the Dubai International Airport, where she and her Indonesian coach were stranded after an explosion occurred close to the area where they were staying amid escalating tensions in the Gulf region.

The disruption comes after the United States and Israel launched a major offensive on Iran. The developments forced multiple airlines to cancel or reroute flights.

Sindhu, who is scheduled to compete in England on March 3, has been stuck in Dubai since Saturday after flight operations were suspended and confirmed that she is safe.

"Once our flight landed in Dubai, events beyond our control began to unfold. Shortly after, the airspace was shut down and the last few hours have been extremely tense. We could hear the sounds of interceptions overhead," the shuttler said.

"A few hours later there was an explosion very close to where we were holed up at Dubai airport. My coach was barely about 100 metres away when it happened and had to quickly move out of the area. Experiencing something like this in such close quarters truly shakes the very foundation you're built on."

Sesko completes United comeback

LONDON, AFP

Benjamin Sesko stretched his hot streak with the winning goal as Manchester United beat Crystal Palace 2-1 to go third in the Premier League, while Tottenham failed to dispel relegation fears after defeat at Fulham.

Sesko was handed his first start in seven games since Michael Carrick took charge at Old Trafford and rewarded his boss with another vital goal to edge United closer to a return to the Champions League.

Palace had taken an early lead at Old Trafford when Maxence Lacroix outmuscled Leny Yoro to guide in a header from Brennan Johnson's corner.

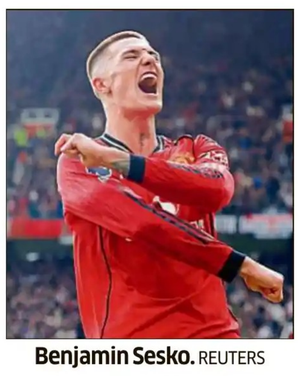
But United hit back to remain unbeaten under Carrick and take their tally to 19 points from a possible 21.

Tottenham remain perilously poised just four points above the relegation zone as interim boss Igor Tudor again failed to halt their alarming slide after a 2-1 defeat at Craven Cottage.

Harry Wilson and Alex Iwobi gave Fulham a deserved half-time lead as they moved up to ninth and back into contention for European football next season.

Richarlison headed in a late consolation for Tottenham, but they remain the only Premier League side without a win in 2026.

The one crumb of comfort for Spurs was defeat for relegation rivals Nottingham Forest, 2-1 at Brighton.



Benjamin Sesko. REUTERS

Man City win

Manchester City shrugged off the absence of Erling Haaland to close to within two points of Premier League leaders Arsenal with a 1-0 win at Leeds on Saturday.

Haaland was absent for the trip to the city of his birth due to a minor injury that Guardiola described as "not a big problem". Without the Norwegian, City were far from their best but ground out a vital three points against a Leeds side that had lost just twice in their previous 16 games.

Result: Manchester United: 2 (Fernandes 57th P, Sesko 65th) bt Crystal Palace: 1 (Lacroix 4th); Fulham: 2 (Wilson 7th, Iwobi 34th) bt Tottenham: (Richarlison 66th); Brighton: 2 (Gomez 6th, Welbeck 15th) bt Nottingham: 1 (Gibbs-White 13th); Leeds: 0 lt to Manchester City: 1 (Semenyo 45th+2).

Yamal dazzles in Barca's romp over Villarreal

BARCELONA, AFP: Barcelona's teenage star Lamine Yamal scored the first hattrick of his career in a 4-1 win over Villarreal on Saturday that took the Catalan giants four points clear at the top of La Liga.

Robert Lewandowski rounded off Barca's triumph with a late tap-in as they extend their lead on Real Madrid, who host Getafe on Monday, and fourth-place Villarreal who now trail the champions by 13 points.

Results: Rayo Vallecano: 1 (De Frutos 35th) drew with Athletic Bilbao: 1 (I Williams 47th); Barcelona: 4 (Yamal 28th, 37th, 69th, Lewandowski 90th+1) bt Villarreal: 1 (Gueye 49th); Mallorca: 0 lt to Real Sociedad: 1 (Soler 36th); Real Oviedo: 0 lt to Atletico Madrid: 1 (Alvarez 90th+4).

Dean-Gagan cap off title in style

BENGALURU, DHNS

Newly-crowned Indian National Rally champions Dean Mascarenhas of Mangaluru and co-driver Gagan Karumbaiah of Kodagu (Team TSI Racing) rounded off the season with a comfortable victory in the Blueband Rally of Maharashtra, the sixth and final round of the FMSCI Blueband Indian National Rally Championship (INRC) 2025 in Nashik on Sunday.

Having sealed the National title with a round to spare at Indore last month, the duo delivered another dominant performance to cap a memorable campaign.

Philippos Matthai emerged as one of the standout performers of the rally, winning the INRC2 class and finishing an impressive third overall, while Pragathi Gowda delivered a noteworthy drive to finish fifth overall, matching pace with men in a field of 32 cars. The pair mounted a strong challenge to INRC2 championship leaders Jason Saldanha and PV Srinivasa Murthy, but the latter did enough with a fourth place to secure the title, having built points buffer earlier in the season.

Abin Rai of Madikeri wrapped up the Junior INRC title, while the Ladies Class battle went down to the wire with young Tarushi Vikram of Chikkamagaluru claiming her maiden National title in her debut full season.

Karnataka duo Dean Mascarenhas (right) and co-driver Gagan Karumbaiah celebrate with their spoils on Sunday.

Provisional National Champions: INRC overall: Dean Mascarenhas, Mangalore; Co-driver Gagan Karumbaiah. Kodagu (TSI Racing).
INRC2: Driver: Jason Saldanha, Mangalore (Arka Motorsports); Co-Driver: Milen George (Kottayam).
INRC3: Vishakh Balachandran, Thiruvananthapuram; Co-driver: Chiranth Jain, Karkala (Chettinad Sporting).
INRC 3T: Naveen Puligilla; Co-driver: Santosh Thomas (Both Hyderabad) (Chettinad Sporting).
Junior INRC: Abhin Rai (Madikeri) Privateer.
Ladies Class: 1. Tarushi Vikram (Chikkamagaluru) (Chettinad Sporting).
Challenge Cups: Classic cars: Siddhartha Santosh, Privateer, (Bengaluru); Co-driver: Sawan Sathyanarayan.
Gypsy: Sanjay Aggarwal, Privateer, Co-driver: Dheeraj Manae (both Bengaluru).

Takele retains Tokyo Marathon crown

Tadese Takele

TOKYO, AFP: Ethiopia's Tadese Takele successfully defended his Tokyo Marathon title on Sunday, edging Kenya's Geoffrey Toroitich in a sprint finish to cross the line in 2hr 3min 37sec.

Takele finished with the same official time as Toroitich after a dramatic battle for the line, with Kenya's Alexander Mutiso just one second further behind in third place.

"I knew that the final stage would be decisive," said the 23-year-old Takele.

"Around 41km I wanted to wait and see what would happen and then I made my move right before the finish."

Kenya's Brigid Kosgei won the women's race in 2:14:29, a new course record.

Ethiopia's Berukan Welde was second in 2:16:36, followed by her countrywoman Hawi Feysa in 2:17:39.

In warm, dry conditions in the Japanese capital, a men's leading pack including Takele, Toroitich, Mutiso and Kenya's Daniel Mateiko.

KITTUR RANI CHANNAMMA RESIDENTIAL SAINIK SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, KITTUR
CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD., KITTUR
Kittur – 591115 Dist: Belagavi, State: Karnataka
CBSE Code No.: 830488 Contact Number: 9972936540 School Code: 45438
e-Mail: krcrssocietyktr@gmail.com website: www.kittursainikschool.org

Ref: KRCRSGCCS/Tndr-26-27/2025-26 Date: 02-03-2026

Tenders invited from KRCRSG Consumers' Co-Operative Society Ltd., Kittur
TENDER FOR SUPPLY OF KIT AND CLOTHING FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-27
Sealed Tenders invited from garments/manufacturers, firms, dealers, wholesalers, & suppliers registered under GST, for supply of various school uniforms as under:

TENDER INFORMATION

SL No.	Item Name	Item Description	Approximate Qty Required	Cost of Each Tender Form (non-refundable)	EMD Amount (Refundable)
1	RAYMONDS OLIVE GREEN TROVINE SUITING CLOTH	TROVINE (Blend Code – 5030 Material No – 002939 – 0641	1982 Mtrs	₹1,000/-	₹12,000/-
2	STITCHING JOB WORK OF SCHOOL UNIFORM (OLIVE GREEN)	HALF SLEEVE SHIRT and TROUSER	1034 Pair	₹1,000/-	₹8,000/-
3	SUPPLY OF MAFATLAL BRAND STICHED SCHOOL UNIFORM (GREY COLOUR)	CASUAL FULL SLEEVE SHIRT and TROUSER (BOTH ITEM SHOULD HAVE MAFATLAL BRAND TAG, TO BE STITCHED WITHIN)	1034 Pair	₹1,000/-	₹20,000/-
4	KURLON MATTRESS ALONG WITH ECONOMY PILLOW	KURLON BRAND (Coir Mattress – 72" x 30" x 4")(Economy pillow – 15" x 24")	158 No's	₹1,000/-	₹11,000/-
5	TRACK SUITE (Superpoly, Size – 30 to 44)	UPPER JACKET (Embroidered School logo on front side & school name at back side of the jacket) TROUSER (Three strip)	1508 Pair	₹1,000/-	₹15,000/-
6	HOUSE T-SHIRT (Size – 30 to 44)	Cotton / Matty In Yellow, Purple, Red, Grey, Blue, and Green	1318 No's	₹1,000/-	₹6,000/-

Note: Interested parties may obtain tender form as applicable from, the Manager, KRCRSG Consumers' Co-Operative Society Ltd., Kittur, by paying non-refundable tender form cost each @ **₹1,000/-** through online mode only, for remittance please contact Manager - **9972936540.**
Tender forms can be obtained from the office of KRCRSG Con. Co-Op. Society on all working days between **02-03-2026** to **12-03-2026**. Last date for receipt of filled up forms by **12-03-2026** 05:00 pm.

Place:- Kittur **Sd/-**
Date :- 02-03-2026 **PRESIDENT**

Sublime Samson delivers in clutch

Under-fire batter hits 97 n.o. as India storm into semis

SIDNEY KIRAN
KOLKATA, DHNS

The India-West Indies final Super Eights clash of the T20 World Cup lived up to its blockbuster billing as the Men In Blue rode a sensational innings from Sanju Samson and their collective batting might to storm into the semi-finals here on Sunday.

Set an imposing target of 196 after skipper Suryakumar Yadav surprisingly chose to bowl first at the sold-out Eden Gardens, the Indians needed to bat out of their skins if they were to pip the Caribbeans in the winner-takes-it-all battle. Although the City of Joy had doled out a batting beauty which stayed true till the end of a fascinating contest, the pressure of a must-win game and the fact that India had never chased anything above 173 since 2014 made the target seem like a massive mountain.

However, Samson ensured the trek was rather smooth with an innings of a lifetime. Coming into the marquee event on the back of a miserable run that saw him lose his place in the playing XI to Ishan Kishan, Samson showed the destruction he is capable of on his day. The wicketkeeper-batter smashed a career-defining 97 not out off 50 balls (12x4, 4x6), and with the rest of his batting colleagues rallying around him nicely, India romped home in just 19.2 overs to set up a semifinal against England in Mumbai on March 5.

Just like against Zimbabwe on Thursday, where he announced his return to the playing XI with a blistering cameo, Samson meant business from the get-go, as that was the need of the hour. He first tore into off-spinner Akeal Hosein by smashing him for one four and two sixes in the third over.

From thereon, Samson just kept smashing everything in his sight in a calculated fashion to power India to a famous win that saw the keeper fall down on his knees and thank the Almighty after hitting the winning run.

Sanju Samson thanks heavens after his unbeaten 97 powered India to a five-wicket win over West Indies and into the semifinals of the T20 World Cup at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Sunday. PTI

Earlier, the West Indies yet again rode on their batting depth to post a competitive score despite a strong show from the Indian bowlers. Opening bowlers Arshdeep Singh and Hardik Pandya kept things tight against the West Indies' duo of Shai Hope and Roston Chase by bowling to a plan. There were hardly any freebies on offer, and Hope and Chase had to manufacture shots to find the boundaries. Barring Axar Patel, who was constantly attacked, both Pandya and Arshdeep, as well as Jasprit Bumrah, never let the openers switch to fourth or fifth gear.

In fact, the Indian bowlers were on the money for most of the innings, despite the West Indies batters finding the odd big shot. The run-rate stayed around the 8 mark until the halfway stage, which wasn't bad considering the pitch was actually good for batting. West Indies' one-drop Shimron Hetmyer and Chase then decided to up the tempo, and just when they were hitting their straps, Bumrah stunted it by dismissing both in a brilliant 12th over. And when Sherfane Rutherford departed in the 15th over and West Indies losing momentum at 119/4, it looked like India may restrict their rivals to a below-par total.

But the big-hitting Jason Holder (37 n.o.) and Rovman Powell (34 n.o.) had other plans, unleashing their brute power on the unsuspecting Indians to slowly shift the tide towards the Windies with an unbroken 76-run stand off 35 balls for the fifth wicket.

It started from the 16th over when Arshdeep conceded 16 runs with Powell smacking him for two sixes and a boundary. Varun Chakravarthy then gave away 14 runs, and the ever-dependable Bumrah too caught the virus, leaking 12 in the 18th over. Thankfully, Arshdeep and Bumrah bounced back in the final two overs, which made a massive difference in the end.

SUPER 8s GROUP 1

Teams	P	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
South Africa (Q)	3	3	0	0	6	+2.259
India (Q)	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**4**	**+0.106**
West Indies	3	1	2	0	2	+0.933
Zimbabwe	3	0	3	0	0	-3.415

SEMIFINAL LINE-UP

New Zealand vs South Africa (Mar 4, Kolkata)

India vs England (Mar 5, Mumbai)

SCORE BOARD

WEST INDIES

Hope b Chakravarthy 32 (33b, 4x4, 1x6)
Chase c SKY b Bumrah..... 40 (25b, 5x4, 1x6)
Hetmyer c Samson b Bumrah 27 (12b, 1x4, 2x6)
Rutherford c Samson b Pandya... 14 (9b, 1x6)
Powell (not out) 34 (19b, 3x4, 2x6)
Holder (not out) 37 (22b, 2x4, 3x6)
Extras (LB-1, W-10)..... 11
TOTAL (for 4 wkts, 20 overs) 195
Fall of wickets: 1-68 (Hope), 2-102 (Hetmyer), 3-103 (Chase), 4-119 (Rutherford).
Bowling: Arshdeep 4-0-43-0 (w-3), Pandya 4-0-40-1 (w-3), Axar 4-0-35-0, Bumrah 4-0-36-2, Chakravarthy 4-0-40-1.

INDIA

Abhishek c Hetmyer b Hosein 10 (11b, 2x4)
Samson (not out) 97 (50b, 12x4, 4x6)
Kishan c Hetmyer b Holder 10 (6b, 2x4)
SKY c Rutherford b Joseph 18 (16b, 1x4, 1x6)
Varma c Hetmyer b Holder 27 (15b, 4x4, 1x6)
Pandya Holder b Joseph 17 (14b, 2x4)
Dube (not out) 8 (4b, 2x4)
Extras (LB-5, W-7) 12
TOTAL (for 4 wkts, 19.2 overs)..199
Fall of wickets: 1-29 (Abhishek), 2-41 (Kishan), 3-99 (Suryakumar), 4-141 (Varma), 5-179 (Pandya).
Bowling: Hosein 2-0-22-1, Forde 3-0-22-0 (w-2), Holder 4-0-38-2 (w-1), Motie 2-0-18-0, Shepherd 2.2-0-34-0 (w-3), Joseph 4-0-42-2 (w-1), 2-0-18-0.
Result: India won by 6 wkts.
PoM: Sanju Samson.**India's next match:** Semifinal vs England (March 5, Mumbai)

Gavaskar, Shastri slam Eden's laser show

KOLKATA, PTI: Former India captains Sunil Gavaskar and Ravi Shastri on Sunday questioned the need for a laser show during the drinks break of the T20 World Cup Super Eights clash between India and West Indies at the Eden Gardens here.

India were 53 for two in pursuit of 196 when the powerplay ended and the scheduled break was taken. During the three-minute interval, the stadium lights were dimmed and a laser show was conducted, briefly plunging the ground into darkness.

Both Gavaskar and Shastri raised concerns that the sudden change in lighting conditions could disrupt the batters' focus and vision.

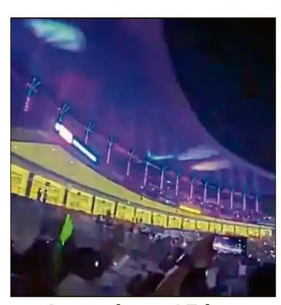
"The laser show during the two-and-a-half or three minutes of the drinks break... it's not easy on the batters, or anybody for that matter," Gavaskar said on commentary.

"To get your eyes used to the light, to get the bright lights again, you have darkness around you."

Gavaskar said such spectacles were unnecessary in a global tournament.

"You have a laser thing going on. This is the World Cup. And for two and a half minutes, do you need this kind of entertainment?

"In the IPL, it's fine in the middle of the IPL. Not in the knockouts of the World Cup."



Laser show at Eden Gardens during India-West Indies match. X

'C for cupcakes': SA coach takes sly dig at broadcaster

NEW DELHI, PTI: South Africa head coach Shukri Conrad on Sunday took a sly dig at the host broadcaster of the T20 World Cup for airing a commercial connected to the "chokers" tag associated with the Proteas ahead of their game against India here.

That commercial did not age well as South Africa thrashed India in their Super Eights opener and are the team to beat in the tournament. South Africa were finally able to shed the longstanding chokers tag by winning the World Test Champions title last year.

Responding to a question regarding pressure ahead of the T20 World Cup semi-final against New Zealand, Conrad pointed out to the "cupcakes" besides the usual chokers reference in a tongue-in-cheek remark.

"There's always pressure. I think it's what you do with that pressure and how you shift the pressure. As for the C word, I think there's another one for it, cupcakes. I thought we kind of enjoyed that," said Conrad after Zimbabwe match.

"But no, there's always pressure, and it's really about embracing that pressure. And we don't do things any differently. We're going to prepare exactly the same way for New Zealand."

SA carry perfect record to semis

Skipper Raza's lone battle not enough as Zim end winless in Super Eights

NEW DELHI, PTI

Sikandar Raza singled-handedly kept Zimbabwe in the game with a special all-round performance before a shaky South Africa were able to steady the ship for a five-wicket win in their final Super Eights game of the T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

After opting to bat, Raza made a sublime 73 off 43 balls in an otherwise ordinary batting display as South Africa limited Zimbabwe to 153 for seven.

After removing the dangerous duo of Aiden Markram and Quinton de Kock in his first two overs in the powerplay, Raza returned to dismiss a rampaging Dewald Brevis (42 off 18 balls) leaving the Proteas at 101 for five in the 11th over.

With another 53 runs needed and the odd ball keeping low, South Africa felt the pressure but Tristan Stubbs (21 not out off 24 balls) and George Linde (31 not out off 21 balls) were able to get the job done in 17.5 overs.

Losing their first three wickets inside the powerplay, Brevis and David Miller did what they are known for to take the wind of Zimbabwe's sails. A barrage of big hits and all of a sudden the momentum was back with South Africa.

There were few more hiccups in the run chase but Stubbs and Linde ensured South Africa carry their unbeaten run into the semifinal against New Zealand in Kolkata.

Zimabwe, on the other hands, lost all their three games in the Super Eights phase after topping the group stage. Despite the loss, Raza stole the show in the afternoon game at Ferozshah Kotla.

The Zimbabwe captain got the fours and sixes at will while the other batters struggled to find the same flow against high quality pace attack.

The batters, barring Raza, tried to attack the likes of Kwena Maphaka, Anrich Nortje and the in-form Lungi Ngidi but were unsuccessful.

Maphaka and Nortje are not even part of the usual South Africa eleven with Kagiso Rabada, Marco Jansen and Keshav Maharaj rested from the inconsequential game heading into the semifinal.

Having done well to reach the Super Eights, Zimbabwe found it tough to replicate their league stage success against the bigger teams.

Raza knows what they need to do to consistently challenge the established teams but they are not there yet. Power-hitting is a critical aspect of the shortest format and the team needs more batters like Raza to put high quality attacks under pressure.

On Sunday, openers Tadiwanashe Marumani (7) and Brian Bennett (15) began well against left-arm spinner George Linde but could not force the pace against the pacers.

Brief scores: Zimbabwe: 153/7 in 20 overs (Sikandar Raza 73, Clive Madande 26 n.o.; Kwena Maphaka 2-21, Corbin Bosch 2-40) lt to South Africa: 154/5 in 17.5 overs (Ryan Rickelton 31, Dewald Brevis 42, George Linde 30 n.o.; Sikandar Raza 3-29). **Result:** South Africa won by 5 wkts. **PoM:** Sikandar Raza.

South Africa's Dewald Brevis (right) plays a shot as Zimbabwe's Tadiwanashe Marumani looks on during their Super Eights match at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

Zimbabwe await clarity on flying back home

NEW DELHI, PTI: Having completed their commitments in the T20 World Cup, Zimbabwe are awaiting clarity on their departure plans following the closure of Dubai aiport due to escalating tensions in the Middle East.

Majority of the Sikandar Raza-led squad was supposed to fly out of Delhi in three batches from Monday morning but those plans have now been put on hold, informed head coach Justin Sammons following the loss in their final Super Eights fixture against South Africa.

Zimbabwe all-rounder Graeme Cremer is based in Dubai and his plans are also up in the air following the closure of the airspace in major airports in the Middle East. The team members were supposed to take the connecting flight from Dubai.

Asked if the worsening situation in the Middle East was a distraction to the players including Cremer, Sammons said it was difficult to ignore that completely.

"You'd still believe that the focus is on the game. But at the end of the day, I'm sure it's, you know, it's in the back of everyone's minds. You know you're going home, but how you're going home, when you're going home

Sammons added that no clarity has been provided to the team post the game on Sunday.

Jayasuriya to step down as SL coach

COLOMBO, PTI

Sanath Jayasuriya has decided to step down as Sri Lanka's head coach in the wake of his team's abysmal performance in the T20 World Cup.

Co-hosts Sri Lanka lost all their games in the Super 8s stage. In the preliminary stage they were beaten by Zimbabwe and recorded wins against Australia and the lowly Oman and Ireland.

"My contract ends in June but I will go before that, I will be talking to Sri Lanka Cricket to decide my stepping down," Jayasuriya told reporters after Sri Lanka lost to Pakistan on Saturday.

Sanath Jayasuriya

"We should have done better, I am sorry and I apologize to fans," Jayasuriya, the player-of-the-tournament when Sri Lanka won the 1996 ODI World Cup, said.

He said Sri Lanka was badly hampered by the injuries to Wanindu Hasaranga, Matheesha Pathirana and Kusal Mendis.

"Their replacements could not perform to the levels required. Hasaranga was my best player you can't easily find a replacement for him," Jayasuriya said blaming both bowler and batter inconsistency for the poor show.

Over the one-and-a-half years of his services Sri Lanka improved their rankings across formats, Jayasuriya said.

The resignation came amid heavy criticism for the team. Former captain Marvan Atapattu was scathing about Sri Lanka's preparations.

"Most teams have moved on with the times playing T20 cricket, but we have stagnated and made little progress," Atapattu told AFP.

"You need to identify your core players and stick with them.

"In Sri Lanka's case, they had no idea what their team was going to be even a week before the tournament.

"It doesn't work that way in international sport."

Sri Lanka lost three frontline bowlers to injury in the first week of the tournament, with fingers being pointed at the amount of lucrative franchise cricket being played.

"When your players are involved in franchise cricket, there is a good chance that they break down just before a crucial campaign and that's what happened to Sri Lanka," he said.

Captain Alyssa Healy struck a breezy 98-ball 158 to power Australia to a massive 185-run win over India in her farewell ODI in Hobart on Sunday. X

Ton-up Healy quits ODIs on a high, leads Australia to 3-0 sweep of India

HOBART, PTI

Captain Alyssa Healy bid adieu to ODI cricket on a glorious note, smashing a rampaging 158 as Australia whitewashed India 3-0 in the series with a 185-run thrashing of the world champions in the third and final match here on Sunday.

It was a fairytale ODI swansong for the 35-year-old Healy as her 158 and Beth Mooney's unbeaten 106 powered Australia to a mammoth 409 for seven after being asked to bat.

Chasing a massive target of 410, India were all out for 224 in 45.1 overs to lose the three-match series 0-3.

Healy will draw curtains to her illustrious international career after playing the one-off pink-ball Test in Perth against India from March 6.

She has accumulated 3,777 runs from 126 ODIs, hitting eight centuries and 19 half tons.

Australia lost Phoebe Litchfield (14) early but Healy and Georgia Voll (62 off 52) shared 134 runs for the second wicket to take Australia forward.

Healy and Mooney then stitched 145 runs for the third wicket to hand Australia a launching pad for the big score.

Playing in her 126th ODI, Healy decorated her eighth ODI century with as many as 27 fours and two maximums from the 98 balls she faced. Voll hit seven fours and one six during her knock, while Mooney's knock was studded with 10 hits to the fence and one six.

India never really got going in their run chase as they lost wickets at regular intervals.

Vice-captain and in-form Smriti Mandhana was the first to depart in the second over before Pratika Rawal (27 off 21) and Jemimah Rodrigues (42 off 29) added 54 runs for the second wicket. But the floodgates opened once Rawal departed in the eighth over, caught plumb in front of the wicket by Annabel Sutherland.

Brief scores: Australia: 409/7 in 50 overs (Alyssa Healy 158, Georgia Voll 62, Beth Mooney 106 n.o., Nicola Carey 34 n.o.; Shree Charani 2-106, Sneh Rana 2-66) bt India: 224/10 in 45.1 overs (Pratika Rawal 27, Jemimah Rodrigues 42, Harmanpreet Kaur 25, Deepti Sharma 29, Sneh Rana 44; Alana King 4-33, Georgia Wareham 2-3) by 185 runs. **PoM**: Alyssa Healy. **Series**: Australia lead multi-format series: 8-4.

ALYSSA HEALY

"I just think what a ridiculous sport we play that it can kick you down so many times and give you opportunities like it has today. I've hated every milestone match, so today was just an opportunity to go out and enjoy it. And yeah, that's a nice way to sign off.

Printed and published by B A Ravi on behalf of The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, at The Printers (Mysore) Private Ltd, Plot nos. 7-12, Kumbalgodu Industrial Area, Bengaluru - 560 074. Executive Editor: K V Subramanya (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act). Editorial Office: 75, M.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. E-mail: editor@deccanherald.co.in. Phone: 080-45557333, Editorial: 080-45557279/080-45557280, Circ: 080-45557204, Advt: 080-45557163/080-45557164. Also printed at Hubballi-Dharwad, Mangaluru, Kalaburagi, Davangere, Mysuru and Hosapete. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. RNI No 3608/57. Registered, Regn. No: KRNA/BGE/1027/2023-2025, posted at Bangalore PSO, Mysore Road, Bengaluru - 560 026. Website: www.printersmysore.com